S. BERNARDINO:
THE PEOPLE'S PREACHER

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S. BERNARDINO: THE PEOPLE'S PREACHER.

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S. BERNARDINO:

1380 – 1444

THE PEOPLE'S PREACHER

BY

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INTRODUCTION.

IT is difficult to imagine why S. Bernardino was so long widely forgotten, why a general devotion to him did not flourish side by side with that of his Father, St. Francis, or with that of his fellow patron of Siena, St. Catherine. In Siena he cannot but be remembered with St. Catherine for all the town is divided between them—half is his side, half hers —and every Siennese artist took pride in honouring them both. Throughout Italy he is remembered in painting and sculpture with his Seraphic Father, or alone, carrying the banner, "I.H.S.," or by that emblem painted on churches and other buildings, and effacing the old shameful signs of party strife. Yet, in general, until lately in the modern world and even among Catholics, for a hundred that knew of St. Francis or St. Catherine there were perhaps hardly ten who had heard of St. Bernardino. And this is strange, as in his own day he was called the second founder of the Franciscan Order, and was too the Apostle of Italy. To-day he is coming into his own again in some respects, for learned men have written well of him, and loving him themselves have made their readers love him too. But he is not yet what he essentially was—a popular saint. Himself a learned man and promoting learning in his Order, yet his strongest appeal was in Franciscan style to the people—to the poor. Of good birth and descent, he yet understood the everyday life

of the poor so intimately that he was able to speak to them as one of them: so much one of them in intimate knowledge and love as to be able to make them understand what he wanted of them as he understood them and what they wanted. He was a reforming saint, reforming his Order and his country, but not as Savonarola thundering from above—rather he entered into the people as though feeling himself below the simplest and the sinner, and so lifted them up to God. It was a power of holiness, but it was also a power of genius—to be able somehow to get really inside the minds of others, and others of every sort. It is remarkable that, after hearing his sermons to the people of Siena, the sermons that reached the simplest, Æneas Sylvius, the great humanist, desired to join the *frati*. Bernardino's sermons were not simple because of any lack, but only because perfect simplicity is the highest order of oratory, and of sanctity.

His work of reform inside the Order was remarkable enough; if it had stood alone it should have earned for him the titles of saint and reformer. Yet it is not on this side that we can best approach him to-day. The wandering preacher, simple son of St. Francis, going "through Italy carrying Jesus," makes a more vivid picture.

There has never been published in England any selection from St. Bernardino's sermons though Mr. Ferrers Howell's recently published book gives abundant brief extracts. But the *Prediche Volgari*, selected and abridged as Don Orlandi has so well done in his *Fioretti di San Bernardino*, give a

better picture of the Saint, and a clearer idea of his preaching than the best chosen short extracts. As the sermons are of such absorbing charm and interest that they must form the centre of any picture of the Saint, I have chosen from the *Fioretti* three examples which, although necessarily shorter than the originals which, we are told, lasted generally three to four hours, are both longer than simple extracts and keep a continuity of subject. Anyone feeling S. Bernardino's unique charm from these examples should go to the *Fioretti* for more—or still better, to the complete *Prediche Volgari*. And anyone wanting a fuller account of the Saint's life, and his relation to his Order and to his age, may find it in Mr. Ferrers Howell's long and admirable *Life of S. Bernardino*. I may add that I had written this little book a long time before Mr. Ferrers Howell's work appeared, but I have made use of it to add one or two additional facts and to correct some of the dates in the Saint's missionary journeys. I have not gone into every detail of these journeys or mentioned every place at which the Saint preached, but only those of chief importance. But I have aimed at giving a vivid picture of him, if one in miniature, chiefly through his sermons, that the Catholics of England may seek him out in them, and that he may become to them what St. Francis is, and what St. Bernardino was to his age and to his country.

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CHAPTER I.

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH.

ON the 8th of September in the year 1380, the memorable year of St. Catherine's death, was born the child who was to become St. Bernardino. His father, Tollo, of the noble family of the Albizeschi, was at this time governor of the town of Massa Marittima, in Siennese territory, called by the inhabitants Massa di Marremma, and it was here that Bernardino was born. His mother Nera died two years after his birth at the early age of 22, and his father followed her three years later leaving their son to the care of Tollo's aunt Diana. This lady took charge of Bernardino's education, instructing him carefully both in religion and in the rudiments of secular learning, until he reached the age of eleven, when she too died and he was brought to Siena by his uncles and placed under the charge of another aunt, Pia, the wife of Christopher degli Albizeschi.

Beyond a bare mention of their names nothing is said of his two uncles Christopher and Angelo degli Albizeschi in any of Bernardino's biographies. But we hear a great deal of his three aunts and his cousin Tobia—dear old ladies of whom the boy was evidently very fond. The stories told of them are full of a quaint charm, and to them is given by his biographers the chief credit for the training of the future saint.

Young as Bernardino was when he first came to Siena he already showed marks both of virtue and rare firmness of character. The least evil word, we are told, brought the colour to his face as if he had been struck, and once when a citizen of Siena spoke to him in evil language Bernardino aimed a vigorous blow at the man's face. He was so small that he only succeeded in reaching his enemy's chin, but this he hit so hard that the noise of the blow rang through the square in which they stood. The man quickly fled, followed by the laughter of the bystanders: St. John Capistran tells us in his Life that several years later while Bernardino was preaching, he saw this same man among the audience weeping bitterly "as though he had been severely beaten with rods."

Another time Bernardino persuaded a man from whose evil talk he constantly suffered, to follow him to a quiet spot where some of his young companions lay in ambush. At a concerted signal they rushed out upon the offender and pelted him with stones, chasing him from the Porta Salaria to the Posteda. "Not less eagerly," says the Life attributed to St. John Capistran, "did they stone this evil man than the Jews Stephen."

The hero of these frays must have been an entirely natural and boyish boy, while at the same time his biographers eagerly note acts of piety such as a saint's childhood often shows. Under his first guardian Diana he had begun the habit of fasting on Saturdays in honour of Our Lady, and he was zealous too in giving alms. On one occasion when there was scarcely enough food for the household,

Bernardino gave away his dinner and supper to a beggar rather than let him go unrelieved. After he had gone from Massa to Siena, he began daily to say the Office of Our Lady, while he continued the custom begun almost in infancy of making little altars in her honour: we are told too of his keen attention to sermons and of a habit of collecting his friends together and preaching to them, repeating all he could remember of what he had heard.

During these years Bernardino's application to various branches of learning was steady and his mind so quick and sure that he made rapid progress and passed many of his older companions. For some time he studied under Giovanni da Spoleto who had opened a school in Siena, for whom he conceived a great admiration, and under whose guidance he progressed so fast, both in letters and moral philosophy, that a more accomplished scholar seldom left the master's school. Bernardino next passed to the study of Scripture, in which he found such delight that all his former learning seemed dull and arid in comparison.

Although no vision of his future vocation seems during these years to have crossed his thoughts, yet by the exertion of all his powers in study, and especially in the study of the Scriptures, the storehouse of his mind was being filled to overflowing for the future orator to draw from. Perhaps one of the most remarkable features in this saint's life is the absence of looking forward, of any sort of foreshadowing of what his mission was to be, the absolute repose in doing God's will as it appeared

at the moment. Step by step he responded to the inspiration of the hour, preparing mind, heart and will for the apostolate of which he remained unaware until all was ready.

During this time of quiet study in Siena Bernardino often visited his old cousin Tobia, with whom his relations seem to have been almost those of an affectionate son with his mother.

A story is told when childhood was passing into youth of Bernardino's trying once to arouse Tobia's fears by teasing her on the subject of a lady with whom he declared himself in love. " So beautiful is she," he said, " and so much do I love her, that I cannot sleep peacefully if I have not seen her during the day." Tobia begged to know more of this lady, but Bernardino would only tell her that she lived near the Porta Camollia. Tobia therefore set herself to watch, hidden near by, and several days running she saw her young cousin come up to the gate and kneel in prayer before a figure of Our Lady painted above it, and return thence straight home. The picture which showed Our Lady ascending into heaven surrounded by angels exists no longer, but St. Bernardino in a sermon many years later used it to image to his hearers the mystery of the Assumption, and we may guess from his description how full it must have been of charm and joy: "*Tutti gli angioli le stanno d'intorno . . . giubilando, cantando, danzando, faciendole cerchio come tu vedi dipento cola su al porta a Camollia*" (" All the angels stand around rejoicing, singing, dancing, circling about her, as you see painted over there above the Camollia gate ").

Relieved by what she had seen Tobia, in her turn, jested with her cousin, again begging him to tell her the name of the lady he loved, and adding, "If she is of suitable rank we will ask her hand for you in marriage." Bernardino then confessed to her that the object of his love was the Blessed Virgin, and that until the time when he might actually behold her in heaven he delighted in honouring her image on earth. And Tobia with tears of joy clasped her adopted son in her arms, and confessed to him the little trick of which she had been guilty.

There is a nameless charm, something belonging wholly to the Middle Ages and in particular to Italy, about all the stories of the childhood and youth of this saint; a purity and gaiety like the blue Italian skies, the freshness and tenderness of a happy child united to an uncommon firmness of will, the qualities of a great man developing in close harmony with a rare perfection of character.

The next stage in the preparation was the entrance of Bernardino into the Association of the *Disciplinati Confraternitatis Beatae Mariae*—a society among the men of Siena attached to the service of the hospital of La Scala, and who met together besides for prayers and religious exercises. Only those who were noted for piety and strictness of life were admitted amongst its members. Bernardino at about the age of 17 was joyfully received by the brethren and applied himself eagerly to all the good works the Society enjoined. He had already belonged to it for three years when in 1400 Siena was visited by a terrible

outbreak of the plague. It was the year of jubilee ordered by Pope Boniface IX., and crowds of pilgrims hastening to Rome fell ill at Siena and added to the difficulty of finding room in the already overcrowded hospital. This building, dedicated to Our Lady and called Santa Maria della Scala from the flight of steps by which it is approached, stands opposite to the Cathedral door. It may still be seen and admired to-day for the beauty of its architecture, and in mediæval history it was both the refuge of the sick for miles around and a training ground for saints.

On this occasion however the sudden attack of that dreaded enemy the plague for a moment overwhelmed everyone. The difficulty in finding room in the hospital was fearful, and deaths took place to the number of about twenty daily. The staff of La Scala was insufficient for the strain, it became impossible to keep the building clean and the smell was so terrible that few dared enter to give help to the sufferers. The Governor of the hospital, Giovanni Ghiandaroni, was in despair: he was an old man and the task was too great for his unaided strength. He knew not where to turn and prayed earnestly for help.

At this juncture Bernardino, inspired by the example of his cousin Tobia, who had offered her services in the women's side of La Scala, gathered together twenty of his young friends and urged them in burning words to throw themselves into the breach. He did not minimize their danger, but who, he said, could flatter himself at such a time, when all around were falling, with the sure hope of

prolonging his life; and on the other hand, should death come upon them while they were engaged in such a ministry they would go straight to God. Fired by his words they went in a body to the hospital and offered themselves to Ghiandaroni who, deeply moved, scarcely dared at first to accept their services, for the plague was especially infectious to youths of their age. His consent was however won to their self-sacrifice and so much confidence did he gain in them that he handed over almost all his keys to Bernardino and put him in command over the entire hospital. Young as he was—scarcely yet twenty—Bernardino proved himself worthy of the charge.

He took care to purify the infected air with large fires, burning vinegar and other fumigations; he managed to find room for all the patients who came, sometimes being obliged to place beds on the floor; he himself tended the most terrible and often repulsive cases, and was careful about the burial of those who succumbed to the disease. Several of his companions were carried off by the plague, but Bernardino himself remained fresh and vigorous after about four months of heavy labour, and we are told that the very sight of this eager bright-faced boy as he moved among them had a quite extraordinary effect in cheering the sufferers.

At the end of four months the awful scourge ceased. And now at the very moment when his services were no longer needed Bernardino himself fell ill of a fever when paying a visit to one of his friends, Ildebrando de Manetti. He was obliged to remain in his friend's house where he was nursed

by Tobia and Justina de Manetti. His illness was severe and lasted four months. At the end of it he began to think of entering some religious Order, "knowing people of the world," says Vespasiano da Bisticci, "to be in a sea full of wrecks." For a little longer however the claim of another duty held him back. His aged aunt Bartolommea lay dying, with no one to look after her. Bernardino took the office upon himself and tended her for about a year. Bartolommea was a widow and belonged to the Order of the Mantellate of St. Augustin. She was a woman of very noted piety having an especial devotion to the Holy Name. It has been supposed that it was from her that her nephew first learnt that profound love and veneration for It which were to be so prominent in his later life. If this were so the fact is a remarkable one and entirely supernatural, for one biographer quaintly describes Bartolommea's habit of showing her devotion by "repeating the Sacred Word many times, with laboured breathing a hoarse voice and shrill accents, without being in the least able to restrain her feelings." "And," adds another, "though she was most prudent according to the testimony of all, yet so much was she carried away by fervour of spirit when she heard It named that she would without doubt have been thought mad by one to whom her wisdom and sanctity were unknown."

At this meeting of the ways of youth and manhood it would be interesting to gain some idea of the appearance and manner of Bernardino. Of middle height, graceful and pleasant looking with a ready smile and playful manners, his character

and the affection felt for him by his companions are thus spoken of by Maphæus Vegius:—

"They loved him very much," he says, "because of his most amiable manners and pleasing conversation: for with all he was pleasant, cheerful and friendly and always exceedingly obliging and kind, in no wise lofty or ill-tempered, with mind ever serene and soul ever tranquil . . . of simple nature yet not lacking prudence, easy yet not without dignity, gentle yet never swerving from justice, diffident yet never lacking in resolution, peaceful yet never charged with sloth, temperate yet with no touch of pride."

CHAPTER II.

A SON OF ST. FRANCIS.

AT the end of a year Bartolommea's death left Bernardino free to follow his vocation. But he was not sure to what Order he was called and decided for a time at least to make a hermitage in which to give himself to prayer, penance and study of the Scriptures. After some search for a suitable place he retired to a house of his own near the Porta Tufi where he made a little oratory.

His biographers dwell on the austerities he practised both while a member of the *Disciplinati* at Siena and still more in his retirement. For some time past he had worn a hair shirt and had slept in his clothes on a wooden bench or chest, and now he made a bed of a sack of vine branches

on which he slept for three hours only each night, and added to his disciplines and fasts, at last living only on herbs and water.

But the saint himself many years later, preaching in Siena, dwelt critically on this time of his life and his words are of the greatest interest. "I will tell you," he said, "the first miracle I ever worked: it was before I was a friar. A desire came to me to try and live like an angel and not I say like a man. The thought came to me to wish to live on water and grass and I thought I would go and establish myself in a wood and I began to say from myself to myself: 'What wilt thou do in a wood? What wilt thou eat?' I answered thus from myself to myself and I said: 'I will do what the holy Fathers did. I will eat grass when I am hungry and when I am thirsty I will drink water.' And this I resolved to do, and to live according to God I resolved too to buy a Bible to read and a coarse cloak to wear. And I bought the Bible and I went to buy a goat's skin so that the rain should not go through and wet the Bible . . . I went over there outside the Follonica Gate and I began to gather a salad of sow's thistle and other weeds; I had no bread, no salt, no oil; I said to myself: 'We'll begin this first time by washing and scraping it, then another time we'll only scrape it and clean it in no other way; then when we've got into the way of it we'll make the salad without cleaning it at all.' And in the name of blessed Jesus, I began with a mouthful of sow's thistle and having put into my mouth I began to chew it. Chew, chew, it would not go down. Not being able to swallow

it I said to myself, ' Come, let us begin with drinking a gulp of water.' *Mieffe!* The water went down and the sow's thistle stayed in my mouth. In all I drank several draughts of water with one mouthful of sow's thistle and I couldn't swallow it. Do you understand what I mean? With a single mouthful of sow's thistle I drove away all temptation for certainly I acknowledge it was a temptation. This which followed afterwards has been election and not temptation. O! how much one should ponder before following in the steps of others in resolutions which sometimes turn out so bad and appear so good."

Yet it was at this time the clear call came. After reading the Rule of S. Francis, Bernardino felt himself drawn to be a son of the *Poverello*. And one night he saw in a dream a great tower wrapped in flames in the midst of a wide untilled field. At the window was a woman who, standing amid the flames called three times upon the name of St. Francis. Interpreting this vision St. Bernardino used to say that the field was the world, the tower God, the woman Religion or the Church. This dream and allegory fixed the resolve of the future friar, and after consulting with a famous hermit and with F. Galgano of Siena he went to Father Giovanni Ristori, a holy Friar Minor, and placed himself in his hands. Fr. Ristori received him with joy, and presented him to his Superiors, who told him first to sell his goods and distribute the money among the poor. This Bernardino at once did, and it is interesting to hear that he assigned a great part of the money especially to providing

marriage portions for the poor girls of Siena. He then returned to Fr. Ristori who clothed him in the habit of S. Francis at the little convent of S. Francesco in Siena, of which he was Superior, on the feast of Our Lady's Nativity, Sept. 8th, 1402. This was ever the day of days to St. Bernardino. The day of his birth, of his entrance into religion, of his profession, his first Mass and his first sermon. He spoke once of his hope—not however, prophetical—that it would also be the day of his death.

Having on this day received the habit, he eagerly began his noviciate. But his relations and friends, many of whom had already on his parting with all his goods, made a great outcry against him, now came so often to S. Francesco to remonstrate as to leave him no peace. He wished also to keep a stricter rule, and therefore begged leave of his Superiors to go to Columbaio, a little convent of the Strict Observance, where he might go on with his noviciate in greater retirement. Leave was granted and this time at Columbaio was destined in many ways to affect Bernardino's life, for we find him later founding convents of the Strict Observance throughout Italy, and finally becoming Vicar General over them all. It will be well, therefore, to pause here for a short time in the story of his life in order to gain a clear idea of what is meant by the Strict Observance, and what is its history.

To realize the origin of this form of interpretation of the Franciscan Rule, a short reference must be made to the first formation of the Order, and to its history during the lifetime of its founder, for,

much as the life of St. Francis is read, the rather involved history of the Observance is not widely known.

The first Rule drawn up by St. Francis in 1209, when his companions numbered only eleven, consisted simply in the informal adaptation of Gospel precepts concerning poverty, chastity, and obedience. This was verbally confirmed by Innocent III., as St. Francis relates in his *Testament*:

"And when the Lord gave me some brothers no one showed me what I ought to do, but the Most High Himself revealed to me that I should live according to the form of the most holy Gospel. And I caused it to be written in a few words, and simply, and the Lord Pope confirmed it."

From 1219 to 1220 however, St. Francis was away in the East, and during this time there were great disputes and difficulties as to the interpretation of the Rule which Cardinal Ugolino, as Protector of the Order (afterwards Pope Gregory IX) endeavoured to settle. Upon his return in 1221 St. Francis wrote his Rule at great length though still informally, and at the Chapter then held, commonly called the Chapter of Mats, he resigned his office of General. The immense growth of the Order may be seen by the fact that at this chapter were present, 5,000 friars besides about 500 aspirants to the Order.

The third and formal Rule of St. Francis, written by him in 1223, was lost by Brother Elias, then General, and re-written with the help of Cardinal Ugolino. Parts still remained difficult to explain and after the death of St. Francis there were in the

Order two schools of interpretation—the Conventuals, and the Zelanti, or Spirituals.

The Zelanti held to a much stricter and more literal interpretation of the Rule than the Conventuals, especially as regards poverty, enforcing in particular that not only must no individual possess anything, but also the Order as a whole might own nothing—houses, churches, etc., being only lent to them for their use. They called to their support the *Testament* of St. Francis which seemed to interpret the Rule in the same sense as they did. Pope Gregory IX in the Bull *Quo elongati* tried to bring these dissensions to an end, interpreting the Rule with reference to his own share in its drawing up, but without success. Several succeeding Popes also issued Bulls in the same hope, but the Zelanti finally refused to submit to the authority of the Holy See if it ran counter to their own strict interpretation of the Rule. Giovanni da Parma, too, a Zelante, and General of the Order from 1247 to 1257, Petrus Johannis Olivi, Angelo Clareno, and others were tainted with the heresy of the Joachimites, followers of Joachim of Floris. This curious heresy declared that there had been two reigns in the history of religion—the reign of Law under God the Father, and the reign of Grace, under God the Son. The third reign was to be that of Love, and under it the whole of the Church was to be absorbed by one great contemplative Order. Several of the poets of the Zelanti, led away by their intense devotion to St. Francis, giving him almost the rôle of a second Messiah, considered that he was inspired to carry out this

third revelation of Love, and the Friars Minor were the form which the universal Church was finally to take.

Owing therefore to the views of some of the most prominent among them, the Zelanti came to be regarded as tainted with heresy, while the Conventuals on the other hand gradually grew lax in their observance of the Rule.

St. Bonaventure succeeded da Parma as Minister General, and taking a middle course strove to reconcile the two parties and to put an end to the laxity into which the Conventuals had fallen. "I admonish you," he wrote to the prelates of the Order, ". . . . that like prudent and faithful servants of Christ you apply yourselves diligently to the rooting out of pestiferous abuses, and that you show yourselves attentive to discipline and examples of religious fervour. In the first place, excite the Brethren to a love of prayer and at the same time entreat and even compel them to observe the Rule faithfully—fearing the countenance of none; rooting up and pulling down; wasting and destroying; committing the disaffected and insubordinate to prison, or expelling them from the Order, as the laws of justice and piety may demand, lest whilst with cruel mercy you spare a diseased Member, the corruption extend itself to the entire body."

For a time St. Bonaventure succeeded in holding in check the elements of discord, but it was impossible for him to destroy them completely. Even in the saint's lifetime, Olivi the leader of the Zelanti, declared his government not to be

sufficiently rigorous, whilst after his death the Conventuals relapsed once more into the laxity and carelessness which he had striven to uproot.

The treatment of the Zelanti was a matter of great difficulty to the rulers of the Church. For on the one hand it was true that while laxity had spread deplorably among the rest of the Order, they alone led lives of admirable strictness (several of them, indeed, were beatified after death), yet on the other hand they failed in obedience to constituted authority and in some cases had fallen into heresy. At this juncture there arose, towards the middle of the 14th century, in the midst of the Conventuals, a movement towards reform, which came to be called the Strict Observance and which eventually accomplished all that Bonaventure had hoped to effect. This movement originated in the little convent of Brogliano under Giovanni da Valle. It received a serious check near its beginning when Gentile da Spoleto, having succeeded da Valle, was thrown into prison and his community dispersed. In 1363 B. Paoluccio de Trinci succeeded Gentile, and under him the new movement showed greater coherence. The Observants though like the Zelanti most strict to their adherence to the Rule, and especially in keeping strictly to a rigid poverty, were unlike them in a great deference to authority, and were wholly untouched by the theories of Joachim. They were thus looked upon in a more friendly way by the Conventuals and permitted to flourish side by side with them. At such a time of difficulties and dissensions in the Church as the Great Schism, the fear of a new split in the Order

was especially acute and the desire of unity strongly felt, and this fear strengthened the friendly spirit between Observants and Conventuals.

Quietly and unobtrusively then the Observance began to spread in Italy, and about this time we see it appearing in Spain and Portugal and in a marked way in France, where it was aided later by the efforts of St. Colette towards the reform of the Franciscan Order both for men and women.

At the same time there began a general reaction against relaxation, and an impetus towards reform in the Dominican Order, stirred up especially by S. Catherine of Siena, and carried on by B. Raymond of Capua, John Dominici and others. It was an age of new zeal which reacted from one Order to another and was felt on all sides.

Nevertheless the Observance numbered only a few convents with a handful of friars in each throughout Italy; until in the year 1402 the event happened which had so great an influence on its future history and on that of the whole Order—namely, the coming of St. Bernardino into the convent of the Observance at Columbaio.

From this time the history of his life coincides with that of the development of the Observance, and the two must be traced together—from his foundation of the convent of La Capriola to his becoming Vicar General in Italy. To him, with the help of his friend St. John Capistran, belongs the work of spreading, unifying and strengthening this movement until it finally embraced almost the whole Order.

With no sign then of any foreknowledge of

either of the two great works to which he was destined, did Bernardino in 1402 come to the Columbaio to give himself to a life of prayer and of a heroic penance that made him, we are told, the marvel of the whole convent, filled as it was with men themselves of zealous observance.

He began at this time the custom continued for twelve years of not returning to rest after reciting Matins at midnight, but passing the rest of the night in study, prayer and penance. Besides the regular fasts of the Order he kept others on bread and water. He studied the Scriptures with the same diligence as in his student days, and gave himself especially to earnest meditation on the Passion. Beyond begging expeditions on which Bernardino was sent by his Superiors we scarcely hear of him outside his convent walls during the three years that followed his reception at Columbaio, save for one incident which probably happened in the year 1405. As though his continual meditations on the Passion had kindled a fire within him that could no longer be repressed, Bernardino one day set out with two companions to preach, carrying a heavy cross on his bare shoulders, in imitation, says one biographer, of St. Francis, "which father for the Lord and the Lord for us did not shrink from stripping." They carried the cross in turns till they arrived at their destination, where they gathered the inhabitants together and spoke to them in burning words deeply touching the hearts of all. They seem all three to have preached, but we may perhaps fairly guess Bernardino to have been the moving spirit.

In the same year in which this story is placed Antonio Angelo Pireto of the Observance, being made General of the whole Order, heard of the striking goodness of the young friar. Although Bernardino had only been professed two years (1403) and a priest for one (1404) he commanded him to preach. In the summer of 1405 we find him accordingly preaching at the Gate of Siena, called the Alberino in memory of a miracle worked there by St. Francis. Another time, happening to come to the Hermitage of San Onofrio on the Capriola Hill on its patronal feast and finding a crowd assembled, Bernardino, "his heart not permitting him," says one of his biographers, "to let them go with fasting souls from such a solemnity . . . . climbed into a tree . . . and preached with such spirit and energy that all present, learned and ignorant, were much edified, and greatly wondered at heart at this new preacher, although also there were not here wanting some few stubborn men who regarded him as a fool."

So charmed was Bernardino by the situation of this hermitage that he begged leave of Giovanni Ghiandaroni, to whom it belonged, to build a convent of the Strict Observance on the little hill. The Governor of La Scala, remembering Bernardino's services at the time of the plague, could refuse him nothing, and made only one condition—that a pound of wax should be yearly offered by the Friars to the hospital, and this offering has been continued up to the present day.

Bernardino set to work at once with his own

hands, and with the help of his companions soon built a small convent of which, young as he was, he was made the first guardian.

From 1405 to 1417 seems to have been a period of quiet and preparation, Bernardino only preaching occasionally, and it may be gathered with little of the success and fame that were later to be his. Mr. Ferrers Howell quotes Andrea de Bigli who in later years took pleasure in reminding Bernardino that people had not cared to hear him in those days more than any other preacher. One incident of note alone need be told of these years.

The great Dominican, St. Vincent Ferrer, in the course of his evangelizing mission crossed the border into Italy, and Bernardino, having heard of his coming, hastened to Alessandria, and, having heard him preach, sought to speak with him. The two saints met accordingly in private, and Bernardino afterwards attended St. Vincent's sermon. In the midst of preaching the Dominican suddenly broke off the thread of his discourse, exclaiming: "My children, there is in this assembly a religious of the Order of Friars Minor who will soon be a man renowned through Italy; his doctrine and his example will produce great fruit among the Christian people. I beg you all then to give thanks to God, and let us all pray to Him together that He may carry out what He has revealed to me. Soon what I announce to you will take place: I, therefore, will go back to preach the gospel in France and Spain, and leave to this man the care of instructing the people of Italy

who have not heard my voice."[1] St. Vincent accordingly returned to France.

In the year 1417 Bernardino was Superior of the convent of San Francesco at Fiesole.[2] He was now in the flower of his age, the preparation was complete, the powers of the orator and the character of the saint had ripened together, and here in this little retreat among the hills the second great call came.

One night after Matins one of the novices on coming out of the church began to walk about the convent as though in an ecstasy, crying out: "Brother Bernardino, do not keep the talents God has given you hidden any longer; go and preach in Lombardy." The other friars, in some annoyance, tried to stop his cries, but with no success: he declared himself forced to go on and for three nights cried out in the same fashion.

Bernardino was then in Florence preaching on devotion to the Holy Name. On his return, being told what had happened, he begged all the brethren to pray together that he might learn God's Will, and finally came to the conclusion that he was intended to begin a mission of preaching from town to town. This being clear he turned at once to the province to which he felt himself called, and thinking well to begin with Milan set out thither without delay.

[1] Quoted by Amadio Maria.
[2] Wadding. But some biographers say that he was only on a visit to the convent.

CHAPTER III.

THE PREACHING.

At Milan Bernardino began the preaching that was to gain such a hold on the people of every rank and position and to work a most wonderful change through the whole of Italy. "Such was the strength of his words," says Vespasiano da Bisticci, "that he cleansed not only that land but also all Italy from every iniquity of which it was wholly full." The celebrated humanist Maphæus Vegius speaks quite as forcibly and more explicitly of the extraordinary effect wrought by Bernardino on his age:

"I cannot," he says, "wonder and extol enough that one man should have been the means of salvation to so many peoples, that one man was able with his holy teaching and example to correct so many serious errors into which a sinful people daily fell, and so many crimes; to lift to God our souls hitherto bent down to the earth and wholly empty of the things of heaven." He marvels that this one man should moreover have been able "to frame the morals of States, to increase holy studies, to overthrow vices, to drive away scandals, to calm discords, to heal enmities, to quench ancient and fiery hatreds, and in a word to be the author of so much peace, reconciliation and concord . . . For Bernardino is as a coal afire with the Divine Spirit and other coals, themselves quenched, touching him and catching the force of the flame straight way begin to burn."

Going from place to place Bernardino preached now in large towns, now in small villages, and again to those who gave him shelter for the night in farm or cottage. When he arrived at a town in which he was going to preach, he had an altar raised in the square at which he said Mass before beginning his sermon. The sermons lasted from three to four hours, and contained analysis of and close argument from some scripture text supported by other texts, quotations and familiar illustrations from the facts of daily life. "He used to teach the country people," says Bernabæus Senensis, "in a rude fashion and by figure to live well and happily." In reading the sermons one can generally see the moment when the strain of following the argument was becoming too much for his hearers, and Bernardino breaks at once into a lighter manner of illustration and almost of conversation with them.

Most fortunately three volumes of the *Prediche Volgari* of the popular preacher, given in his native town of Siena, are left to us. The manner of their preservation is thus described in the Preface:

"God inspired a man called Benedetto, a shearer of wool, who had a wife and children, and few goods and much virtue, so that letting his work stand still for a while, he collected and wrote down these sermons word for word, leaving not one word unwritten that was preached to him. . . . . Standing during the sermon he wrote on tablets of wax with a style and when the sermon was over he went back to his shop and wrote on paper all that he had written on these wax tablets, in such a

fashion that on that very same day before he went to work he had written the sermon twice."

In these volumes we have Bernardino probably at his very best, for the love of Siena and of his *dilettissimi cittadini* held a very large place in his heart and moved him to some of his most eloquent appeals. No one even reading the sermons can wonder for a moment at the hold he gained on the people, at the reforms he worked and the love he won. They breathe the very spirit of Italy; now as impassioned and eloquent as the lament of Savonarola over Florence urging peace and concord, or scourging the vices that held sway so widely, again in the vein of true Tuscan humour and of familiar talk with his hearers. And all alike are inspired by that faith and devotion which ever wrought in his whole life, and now refusing longer to be hidden, "broke through language and escaped."

Bernardino is hailed in the hymn of Vincent Mastareo as "bearer of that high name to which all heaven looks up," and to spread this devotion and by means of it to stamp out enmities and restore peace was one of the chief aims of his preaching.

In the three volumes of *Prediche* no special order of subject is kept to. The most burning topic, that of the factions, is much dwelt on with an intensity of feeling, and in Siena as elsewhere, party spirit was for the time completely stamped out and the Holy Name replaced the badges of Guelph and Ghibelline in the Churches and public places. Other vices, too, are dealt with in uncom-

promising fashion. "He found it," says an early biographer, "a form of preaching most useful and necessary to the people to condemn and execrate vices whenever it was possible and to praise and exalt virtue."

Perhaps a few quotations taken at random will be the best preliminary illustration[1] of this most remarkable preaching, much as they lose through being translated out of the delightful clear Italian of the original in which the language seems almost perfect. For the preacher was a finished scholar who yet chose the simplest words and phrases that his hearers might at once catch his meaning and be at no loss to follow him at every turn of thought.

The first of Bernardino's sermons in Siena was on Our Lady: "The Advocate of this our city," preached on the feast of the Assumption:—

"Thus I saw her just now going up to heaven with a threefold summons:

First, passing through the world, come!
Second, going past the blessed spirits, come!
Third, precipitant towards the Holy Trinity, come!

. . . All are wholly filled with the highest joy, singing and making festival before glorious Mary. All the angels stand around her, all the archangels, all the thrones, all the dominations, all the virtues, all the powers, all the principalities, all the Cherubim, all the Seraphim, all the apostles, all patriarchs, prophets, virgins, martyrs, all stand around rejoicing, singing, dancing, circling around her as you see painted over there above the

[1] See Chapter x. for further examples.

Camollia Gate, doing honour to Mary even to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost."

And the second sermon on the Office of the Angels dwells too on Our Lady and her love for Siena:

"I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that they should not blow upon the earth, nor upon the sea nor on any tree. I say to thee, that in this it seemed I saw Siena, having four doors on four sides. And it seemed I saw the glorious Virgin Mary, the Mother of Jesus Christ standing before Him and praying Her Son with humble prayers, and she said to Him, 'O, My Son, I ask of Thee this grace and wish that Thou wouldst grant it to me. I wish that Thou wouldst guard the city of Siena, which holds me for its advocate, from every danger, and from every adversity.' And as she stood thus before Her Son it was at once commanded at the prayer of Mary that the city of Siena should be guarded from all danger, and it was ordained that some should keep ward on all the four sides of the city, that is on the east, the west, the south, and the north."

The importance of preaching Bernardino holds to be enormous: by the sermon you have faith in the Mass, by the sermon you know what things are sins, you know about Hell, you know of good works and how to do them, you know of the glory of Heaven. In daily life must be carried out what is learnt in the sermon.

"O how many there will be who will say this morning, 'I did not know what I was doing; I

thought I was doing well, and I was doing ill.' And remembering this sermon he will say to himself, 'O now I know clearly what I ought to do' — referring these words to God, *Verbum tuum lucerna mea est*—Thy word is my enlightening.

"And when thou goest to make a contract thou wilt first think to thyself saying, 'What did Brother Bernardino say? He told me so and so: that is bad, it won't do to do that; this is good, this I will do.'"

Yet, despite the immense importance of the sermon other duties must not be neglected on account of it. "Thou hast a sick person at home? Yes. Dost thou not realise the good thou doest by looking after him? Do not leave him to come to the sermon. Hast thou young children? Yes. Do not neglect their needs to come to the sermon. Hast thou a husband and children and house-keeping to do for their sake? Yes. Do not leave them to attend the sermon: if thou dost not for thy family all they need, I shall not praise thee for coming, for thou shouldst rightly measure the share that belongs to the altar (*ti conviene misurare l'altare*)".

It is by means of preaching that faith is kept alive in the world. But while all that God wills man to know should be eagerly heard, none should seek to discover what God has not chosen to reveal.

"And this is abundantly clear, that you will never see Antichrist until there is silence in our faith. *Doh!* . . . You know that many times it has been said, and even when I was a boy I heard that Antichrist was born. But what do I say?

Even at the time of the Apostles it was said that he was born and also at the time of St. Bernard, and to-day too it is said, and a little while ago it was said firmly. *Doh*! what folly is this of those who want to know more than God wants them to know? Who is he that knows? There is no creature in the world who can know it: therefore our Lord Jesus Christ did not choose to tell it to His disciples, nay, Christ, in so far as he was man, never knew it Himself."

In the midst of a long sermon would come a diversion to recall the attention of the audience:

"I saw a red horse, that is covered with blood, and he who was upon him was the same to whom was given power to take away the peace of the earth . . . and to him was given a very long sword —'*Doh*! bigger than *Durinada*[1]—Oh, how big was it?' I say that it was bigger than all this Campo.. 'Oh, was it as much as from here to the Porta Camollia?' Still more: I tell thee it was longer than all Tuscany. 'Oh, was it more than Italy?' More: It was more than all Christendom. I say it was as large as all the earth and the sea!"

On the evil done by the tongue the preacher is severe in a somewhat quaint fashion:

"This week I am going to speak to you of something which concerns little and great, old and young, men and women, wise and foolish. Do you know what I want to speak to you about? About the wretched tongue. O, it is a bad beast!"

And in another place:

"O citizen, speak little and do good and again

[1] A reference to *Durandal*, the famous sword of Roland.

I tell thee speak seldom. Thus Seneca says: Choose rather to hear with attention than to speak. Woman, thou desirest to please thy husband? 'Yes.' Then speak little: do not chatter as many do *chia, chia, chia,* without ever stopping. O she is hard to manage, a chatterbox. We only know of seven times that the Virgin Mary spoke in the whole of her life and no more. I do not say that she never spoke more. I say that of her speaking we only know of seven times in all. And thirdly I say to thee, speak low, that is to say thou shouldst speak softly, but this speaking softly is not given to us preachers, for to us is given *Clama ne cesses et quasi tuba extolle vocem tuam.* That which is commanded to us preachers is that we should cry out loudly like a trumpet to reprove you that you may turn away from your sins."

And again:

"How many tongues has man and with how many tongues does he speak? I have never heard that he had more than one tongue. I have heard very well that once there passed here a man who had two heads and likewise two tongues, who was going to Rome and was seen here at Siena, and when he came back he came back weeping with one of the heads because the other was dead, and the second was expecting to die too; for as they could not live separated one from the other it could not last long. But in general God has only given one tongue to man. He has not done this with the other members, not with the other senses. God has given man two eyes, He has given him two hands, He has given him two feet, He has given him two

nostrils to smell with—what does it mean that He has given him no more than one tongue? . . . Dost thou know why? . . . because thou art to touch more than to speak, to hear more than to speak, to see more than to speak, because He wants thee to do with less tongue than other senses."

And then when he had caught the attention of the people, knowing he had really gained the hold on them he needed, the orator would speak of the terrible subject of the factions that tore the city, offering them the message of Divine Peace and bidding them choose between God and Satan.

"O woman who hast husband, father or brother who calls himself Guelph or Ghibelline and thou holdest with him; and thou too, man or boy, who hast a partisan father and holdest with him or with anyone belonging to a party, thou art lost if thou die in this state . . .

"Tell me: what is a party? Dost thou know what it is? It is a division: this from that . . . And tell me what is Charity? It is the union of one with another. And therefore thou seest that factions are contrary to charity, for charity is to unite and party-spirit is to divide; and if one of these things goes to God the other goes to the devil."

In picturing to the people the awful results of sin the preacher shows them the state to which the factions actually reduced the towns of Italy:

"Beware, beware, beware, people of Siena, beware, for the devil works much evil and in many ways through our sins. There come plagues which indeed strike thee and thee and thee. Sin has laid the eggs that these evils may come forth; they

have only to break the shell and they break it: suddenly the justice of God is born. Do you know what the chickens are that come out of the eggs sin has laid and is hatching? They are death in divers shapes, pillage of houses and shops, without and within, the firing of dwellings and of vineyards, one man slain by another, women slain too and children, little ones seized and their heads dashed against a wall, your wives and daughters violated before your eyes, treason and theft and discord, the father with his son, one brother with another, for no man can trust another and thus arises so great a destruction that you think only how to do evil one to another. Wherefore I say Beware, beware, O Siena."

He fears the Divine Vengeance will fall on his dear city:

"My citizens, do you want the sword bare or sheathed. Have which you will, one you must choose. You have the warning of what will come upon you if you seek not peace, people of Siena. I see this whole city coming to destruction. Have you understood the meaning of the words I have said to you this morning? Have you understood and heard? *Ephpheta, Ephpheta,* City of Siena be thou opened, City of Siena understand and work out thy salvation . . . Siena, Siena, if thou have not a care to thyself I hear the cry of vengeance, vengeance for sin heaped on sin. And therefore *Ephpheta.*"

CHAPTER IV.

IN LOMBARDY, PIEDMONT AND VENETIA.

At Milan, Bernardino began his preaching in small churches on the usual days for sermons, but by degrees his fame spread abroad, and he was asked, we are told, to preach the Lent (1418) in the cathedral. On the first day of his Lent course something happened which drew general attention. In the middle of his sermon the preacher stopped abruptly, stood silent for some moments as though in a trance, and then, without further words, came down from the pulpit. When he was entreated to explain his reasons for this he at first refused to reply, but on being further urged he said: "I saw my sister (i.e. cousin) Tobia, whom I always revered as my mother, drawing her last breath at that moment, and her soul clothed in the garment of immortality going up to heaven."

A messenger was instantly despatched to Siena by the Duke who confirmed the truth of Bernardino's words, and when this story was told in the city it drew yet greater crowds to hear him. Maphæus Vegius, himself a schoolboy in Milan at the time, relates that the people were so moved by this preaching that "they swarmed to the churches in numbers like ants so that there were scarcely enough to hear and absolve their sins and to restore them with the holy and health-giving Sacraments."

Many years later, in a letter in Bernardino's de-

fence, Duke Philip Visconti told the following story of this first visit to Milan:

"For I, out of a certain curiosity of mind, took trouble to test him whether he was preaching to the honour of God or moved by some desire of temporal goods or vain glory, and I sent to him by a certain faithful messenger of mine a certain weight of gold, commanding him not to depart from Brother Bernardino unless first that brother accepted the whole weight of gold, and, if the brother refused, to pursuade him with all skill and shrewdness to accept. And the messenger, coming into the presence of the man of God, brought him the aforesaid weight of gold. But the brother, by no means agreeing, rejected it like dust and in addition said to him, 'May the Lord the giver of all good things reward your Prince with infinite graces.' Whence the messenger, seeing that he made no way, began again according to his lord's intention with great prayers and exhortations to persuade him to accept the gift which, although small, was offered with great liberality, saying that he would by no means go back unless he would accept it, more especially as such were his orders. Whence the man of God, poor in temporal goods but rich in virtues, seeing such firmness in the said messenger and fearing that he (the messenger) might be blamed in the matter, inspired by God did not assent that it should be given to him but that it should be distributed among the poor prisoners in this way. Calling one of his companions and the said messenger he went to the public prison, and, asking for the gaoler, said to

him 'See how many poor are within, and if this messenger's gold holds out, let them be liberated and set free from their debts.' And when this was done the messenger bidding him farewell departed from him. The messenger, however, forthwith returned home and reported all that the man of God had done. And ever afterwards there has always been a devotion for him among us."

This is the duke's own version of the story, but some of Bernardino's biographers tell it differently, saying that the saint had denounced from the pulpit the exaggerated and almost divine honours that were paid to Visconti and that he, finding threats useless to stop the preacher, tried to corrupt him. They also add that the sum of money being insufficient for all, two debtors were left unreleased, whereupon Bernardino offered to give himself up in their place if the money could not be found, and the citizens of Milan at once collected it.

The people of Milan made Bernardino promise to return there for the following Lent. Leaving them he attended a Chapter of the Order at Mantua and then set out to preach in Piedmont.

At Castelnuovo and at Alessandria he came upon the track of Manfred of Vercelli, a friar of the Order of St. Dominic, who, following in this matter the teaching of St. Vincent Ferrer, maintained the immediate coming of Antichrist. But Manfred added to this doctrine the teaching that it was lawful for wives and husbands to leave one another without each other's consent in order to do penance. He was accompanied on his missionary journeys by about 400 penitents, both men and

women, in the white robes of the Dominican third Order.

Manfred was a pious and sincere man and both he and his band of penitents led irreproachable lives; but his judgment and imagination were strained and excited, and Bernardino saw the great danger of such theories spreading. He therefore informed the Inquisitor of Alessandria and the Superior General of the Dominicans of what Manfred was doing, and in the following year wrote a small treatise and a pamphlet of twenty-three articles against him. The wisdom of this opposition was seen later when the Pope himself tried in vain to disperse Manfred's bands of penitents to their homes and many of them ended their lives in a state bordering on madness. But Bernardino called down on his head by his action the enmity of Manfred's friends, who were the cause of much trouble and difficulty to him later.

At his second Lent in Milan, Bernardino seems to have taken the whole city by storm. "This entire city," says the chronicler, "which was filled with an innumerable people might be seen as if torn from their dwellings encircling this holy man."

The citizens built too on the site of the hermitage and Church of S. Angelo, a new church and large monastery of the Observance. The Observance was to grow very mightily in numbers in the course of Bernardino's apostolate in Italy, keeping still its early fervour. Especially he besought his brothers, the "little children" of the *Poverello*, not to forget their early humility, and to be very strict, "*al fatto del denaiuolo*" (in the matter of pence).

Bernardino now set out for Bergamo preaching on the way, as he was wont, to all who gave him lodging, and coming to the city he began to war especially against the Guelph and Ghibelline factions by which it was torn. The state to which Italy was reduced by these feuds and in which it remained for so long is thus described and commented on by Cardinal Capecelatro, writing of a period some years earlier:

"The hatreds of the Middle Ages," he says, "had a vigour and tenacity in them unknown in our days when base cowardice sometimes disguises itself under the mask of gentle manners. The superabundant life of those times when men seemed full of young blood, and which when directed to Christian practice produced such prodigies of charity, betrayed itself also in those deadly hatreds which resisted even the instincts of faith then so powerful in society. The customs of their old heathen and barbarian ancestors had not entirely decayed, so that the supreme moment of life, blessed and sanctified by the last offices of religion, was often chosen as a time for securing that the dying sinner's thirst for vengeance should last beyond the tomb. Horrible oaths sealed these iniquitous compacts; the Almighty, the Father of Mercy and of Pardon was called upon to witness the work of blood, and sons believed themselves bound to discharge the infamous obligation as a sacred inheritance from their fathers."

These feuds then, thus handed on from generation to generation, increased rather than diminished with time, and Bergamo at this date was among

the worst of the Italian cities, so that we are told, "murder reigned there as master."

At his first arrival at Bergamo, the preacher of peace and concord had no success—only a very few came to his sermons, and there seemed no hope of influencing the turbulent city as a whole. The very mediæval manner in which Bernardino at last contrived to gain their attention is thus told by a biographer:[1]

"On the Sunday, therefore, when he was preaching to the small number that had gathered, he said: 'I recommend you all to come on the festival of next Sunday, and to call and bring with you the rest of your fellow citizens and neighbours, townsfolk and country people, men and women, old men and children, for I must present to all of you standing here a letter from heaven which comes most certainly from the Holy Spirit and is directed by God to the Church of Pergamum' (the old name of Bergamo). Meanwhile then (continues the chronicle) before the aforesaid Sunday the man of God wrote in a large book those very things which were revealed by Christ to St. John the Evangelist in the Isle of Patmos by means of an angel, and written by the same John in his Apocalypse, but directed to the Church of Pergamum."

And on the Sunday, seeing a great multitude of men and women come together, Bernardino opened, in the sight of all, the book in which he had written the Scripture passages—"at the beginning of which, after the manner of scribes, he had

[1] Anonymous, *XV. Century Life*, edited by Père d'Araules, 1906.

fashioned a large letter." And the people seeing this "were turned to admiration and amazement and wonderfully and most diligently disposed themselves to receiving the things contained in the letter with the ears of the body and of the mind."

Taking then this letter as his text, Bernardino preached a sermon that so moved his hearers that from that time they came more and more fervently and with great eagerness from all parts to hear him, and we are told that he succeeded in completely putting a stop to the "many various dissensions and parties, enmities and hatreds, murders and innumerable vices and sins" that had before prevailed in the city. He went to the root of the evil in abolishing all the signs of party that people had been used to exhibit on their garments, their eating and drinking vessels, &c., &c. Above all he caused all party monograms to be erased from public buildings and especially churches, and the Holy Name to be painted in their stead.

Not in Bergamo alone did Bernardino change war into peace with marvellous speed. The district between Treviglio and Caravaggio received, from his success in reconciling cities before at enmity, the name of "the field of peace."

Indeed in his mission of peace in Lombardy we hear of only one failure—at Como, where the factions were so rooted in fierce hatred that Bernardino made little or no impression.

Early in 1420 Bernardino preached at Cremona and Piacenza, and in May we hear of him at Siena. In 1421 he preached the Lent at Mantua. Here Paola Malatesta, the wife of the Imperial Vicar

of the town, John Francis Gonzaga, gained permission from Rome to found three convents of the 1st Rule of St. Clare, and four friaries of the Observance at Mantua, Milan, Piacenza, or elsewhere. Bernardino was her commissary and chief agent in the matter; and it is probable that this was to some extent the cause of the next great step in the history of the Observance, for in 1421 Angelo de Salvetti, Minister General of the Franciscans, appointed Bernardino Vicar and Commissary of the Observance in Umbria and Tuscany. In Brescia and on the neighbouring island in the Lago di Garda, Bernardino then established two friaries, and the Duke of Milan in the same year gave to the use of the friars, the Church of St. James near Pavia, together with a farm, vineyard, meadow and garden.

A legend is related of Bernardino whilst he was preaching in Mantua. He was lodged in the convent of S. Maria delle Grazie, five miles from the city across a lake that lies below it. Setting out one day to preach with a companion, he asked a boatman to have the charity to ferry them over the lake. "The man," says F. Amadio Maria, "who was one of those who care little for the reward they would receive from above, demanded his fare, thinking that Bernardino secretly carried money." In vain did the friars assure him that they were penniless. He met their entreaties with an absolute refusal, not caring if he were the cause of the city missing its sermon for that day. Then Bernardino turning to his companion, asked if he confided truly in God, and, on being told that he

did, spread his cloak upon the waters. The two brethren then stepped on the cloak and kneeling down, "continually imploring the divine help without any fear," were carried swiftly over to the opposite bank, arriving long before the boat. All who saw this "loudly implored the divine mercy," for they were filled with amazement, while the friars landed in perfect safety, not even the cloak being wet. Would that Tuscan or Venetian painter had left a picture of this scene, showing the vivid green of the banks, the bright colours in the ferryman's boat, the brown cloak on the blue water and the expressions of awe and confidence on the faces of the two friars who were "continually imploring the divine help without any fear."

At Crema in 1421, or perhaps the previous year, Bernardino caused exiled citizens to be brought back and restored to the enjoyment of their goods and lands; to such an extent did his words work that those who had driven them out were now the first to welcome them back. "Returning to his house," Bernardino relates of one of these exiles, in his *Prediche Volgari*, "he found his enemy in the square, who seeing him ran and embraced him and wanted to take him to supper with him. Another who had taken possession of his house, at once, while he was supping, took away his own belongings, leaving those of the exile there. Everyone who had something of his had it carried to his house. And at once his bedsteads, his chests, his sheets, his table cloths, his basins, his casks, his silver, were brought back in such a way that that

very evening he was taken to his house, and slept on his own bed amongst his own belongings. And I tell you that he seemed happy who could bring him his belongings and possessions. Moreover, on that day whoever possessed his animals or horses rejoiced to come to him and to say, 'Here are thy oxen, here are thine asses, here are thy sheep.' So much so that in the end he came into possession of all his goods. And so was it with the other exiles."

At Brescia, as at Bergamo, Bernardino had complete success. Leaving Lombardy he now came into the territory of Venice and to that great city of commerce itself. And he preached, no longer against the factions here marvellously absent, but of trade and of the laws of fair dealing that should regulate it. "In most holy fashion he praised commerce," says Bernabæus, "teaching what is honourable in hiring and selling, as the Christian religion allows."

For several months he preached with immense success in this city and persuaded the Government to give the island of St. Mary of Nazareth for victims of the plague, and that of S. Andrea al Lido to the use of the Carthusian monks, pointing out to them that these monks "watch continually like faithful sentinels, over the defence of the city and people," and speaking too of "the great aid which they afford to those other religious who issue from their cloister to combat vice, so that, whilst they like Moses raise their pure hands to heaven in prayer, the victory which the warriors obtain properly belongs to them."[1]

[1] Amadio.

In Venice too Bernardino won two of the three Franciscan convents to the Observance.

Leaving Venice, and after again visiting Bergamo, he evangelized the surrounding country and principal towns of the Venetian territory.

His success throughout Venetia is thus described by an early biographer.[1] "Then he sought Verona with the whole province of the Venetians, where he so much honoured the Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, that all the people of Venetia, on the shrines of the saints and on their private dwellings and houses, painted most honourably the Holy Name of Our Saviour in gold letters with glowing rays; and in soul and mind they very well held fast that Name in a Christian and devout manner . . . and he confirmed indeed the austere Venetians in upholding virtue."

In 1413 the Lent sermons at Padua were collected and written down, but very imperfectly, by Daniel da Porciglia, under the curious title *Seraphin Quadragesimale*. For under the allegorical figure of a seraph having six wings and two diadems adorned with precious stones, Bernardino considered divine love and all the attributes that went to make it up.

It was supposed by the townsfolk of Padua that at the end of this Lenten course Bernardino would take the road to Venice. And indeed according to one biographer he was himself uncertain up to the last moment whether he was called there or should return to Vicenza. Thus while he was setting out for Vicenza early in the morning, an immense

[1] Bernabæus Senensis.

crowd was waiting for him on the road to Venice. Nevertheless about 500 people collected to follow him and pressed around him kissing his hands. When they had gone a little way from the city Bernardino, blessing the multitude, begged them to go back, but they would not, some going before and some following. The friar's companions hastening on begged the keeper of the bridge they were to pass, to draw it up directly Bernardino had crossed. He did this with the result that only those who had gone on before found themselves with Bernardino on the other side. At a village about midway between Padua and Vicenza, all rested a while. "The country people of the surrounding villages, hearing of the Saint's arrival at this place, were all moved with desire to see so great a man, and brought some bread, others wine, and others meat to satisfy the wants of the multitude, who spread their tables across the high road."

And the people of Vicenza coming out to meet him received him with no less joy.

At Vicenza Bernardino preached again of fair dealing and especially against usury. One is accustomed to think of usury as meaning the exaction of an excessive rate of interest on money lent. But in fact it meant both in ancient and mediæval times the taking of any interest whatever on money lent, and with this meaning it was unanimously condemned by the Fathers and Schoolmen. The chief reasons for this were:

(1) The Mosaic law forbade lending at interest to poor Hebrews, and discouraged lending at interest to anyone (Ex. xxii. 25, Levit. xxv. 35, 37, Prov. xxviii. 8).

(2) The Schoolmen followed Aristotle in holding that according to nature money was barren and could not breed money.

(3) The spirit of Our Lord's words, "Give to him that asketh of thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not away." "Freely have you received, freely give." "Do good and lend, hoping for nothing thereby."

The spread of commerce and the necessity of borrowing and lending huge sums for commercial enterprise, gradually broke down religious objections against any but an excessive exaction of interest, and it became tacitly permitted although the Holy See gave no positive decision on the subject. (See *Catholic Dictionary*, Addis and Arnold). It is curious to note that in our own day Ruskin revived the theory of the natural barrenness of money, and spoke quite as strongly on the subject as Aristotle or the Schoolmen.

Holding this view of the evil of taking any interest on money lent, Bernardino often preached strongly on the subject. At a sermon given in Vicenza, a biographer[1] tells an amusing story of the effect of his words:

"Before the pulpit was a certain usurer grown old in this execrable gain, and by the guidance of divine grace the holy man often cried out against this impious vice and seemed with his eyes and hands to cry out and to speak against this usurer, and moreover almost all who were present to hear the word of God said, 'Truly this holy man, guided by divine light, says well and in holy fashion what-

[1] *XV. Century Life*, edited by Père d'Araules.

soever he speaks against this man,' for that man, namely the usurer, was known to all. And they lifting themselves up a little, looked at the often mentioned usurer; moreover, they pointed him out to others who stood at a distance displaying their hands against him, or stretching out their fingers; and among almost all this caused great laughter. But he, about to turn to penitence, stood with great shame, his head bent down and his eyes shut, awaiting with a great longing the end of the preaching, believing firmly and holding that all these things which were spoken by this man were inspired by the Holy Spirit for the salvation of his soul, so that he should immediately after the sermon go to the man of God and place himself in his hands, that the holy man might dispose of all his goods according to the divine good pleasure and that he might divide among those whom he had wronged the part that was clearly theirs and distribute the doubtful part for the love of God. By God's Will then the sermon came to an end.

" Without delay did the usurer come to the cell of the man of God, and knocking he asked to speak with him. And there came at once brothers and friends of the friar to whom he said:

' Truly that is a holy man and God has revealed to him all my impious and infamous sins, whence I am ready to do whatever he shall command me.'

" The brethren said: ' Why do you say so?'

" And he replied, ' Because to-day that holy man told me all that I had done, said and thought, and chiefly all that concerns my impious usury.'

" The brethren said: ' It is well that you should as a pious man, take in good part the discourse of

the man of God, yet he was not speaking expressly by name against you in person, but in general against all who exercise the great evil of usury after the fashion of good preachers who fear God, for thus they are commanded.'

" But he said, ' I saw him ever pointing with his hand and turning his eyes upon me.'

" And though the friars affirmed the contrary, namely that this was in no way spoken against himself, he affirmed it more and more, and said rejoicing, ' All this has been worked for my salvation by the Holy Spirit.'

"And giving thanks he departed from the brethren and of his own accord made full restitution, thanking God. And all the days of his life he had towards the man of God a great devotion and reverence."

A very different story is told of a man in Milan who came often to Bernardino privately and begged him to go on with these sermons against usury, and to make them more and more severe as they did much good. This man turned out to be the greatest usurer in the town, and the sermons which converted his rivals brought him increasing wealth day by day.

Bernardino next preached at Treviso where Albert of Sarteano, who till then had been a Conventual, joined the Observants, and set out to travel with the Saint, going first to Belluno and Feltre and intending to accompany him on his wanderings for several months. Of Albert, Bernardino said to the people of Siena, "*O elli e il piu cordiale figliuolo ch'io abbi.*"

CHAPTER V.

THE MISSION TO THE CITIES CONTINUED.

THE Advent of 1423 was preached at Ferrara where Bernardino was called by Nicholas d'Este, and here at Bologna and Florence another side of his preaching and reforms becomes prominent—his sermons in these places being chiefly directed against luxury of life, and against games of hazard.

Nicholas d'Este, Marquis of Ferrara, and his court set an example of unbounded extravagance and luxury of dress, which affected the whole city. Indeed, at this time, in part perhaps in reaction from the austerity of the Middle Ages, the fashions had become more exaggerated than at almost any other period. Sumptuary laws were passed in most States which vainly attempted to control the dress especially of women, limiting the length of their trains, the size of their sleeves, &c. And it has been reckoned that some dresses of this period made of gold brocade must have cost from £1,500 to £2,000 in present day coinage. Bernardino's sermons had for a time at least more effect than the sumptuary laws, for here at Ferrara "he repressed," we are told, "the unrestrained license of the women and moderated their pomp of dress and of carriage."

It was something if in this city the preacher's efforts produced even a momentary check, for the feet of the people and especially of the reigning house were set on the path of luxury and splendour,

and were yet to travel far along it. Of all the cities of Italy none was more affected by the rush of pagan influences that came with the Renaissance, none more steeped in the vices of the age. The grim splendour of the ducal palace calls up to the mind a lonely figure, who, not as Bernardino passing through the city, but dwelling and growing up in its midst, strove with prayer and fasting, with a mighty strain of his whole great nature, against deeper and more widespread evils, a city and a civilization rotten to the core. Beneath the ducal palace were "subterranean dungeons guarded by seven gratings from the light of day, They were full of immured victims, and the clanking of chains and groans of human beings in pain could be heard from their depths, mingling with the strains of music and ceaseless revelry going on above, the ringing of silver plate, the clatter of majolica dishes, and clinking of Venetian glass."[1]

With dread and horror Savonarola heard this double voice of the time's corruption, until "almost delirious with grief, he could find no refuge save in church. Prayer, indeed, was his continual solace, and his tears would bedew the altar steps, where, stretched prostrate for hours at a time, he besought aid from heaven against the evils of this vile, corrupt and dissolute age."

It is sometimes reproached against itinerant preaching that its effects are not lasting, yet surely much has been gained for the souls of one generation if for a while a city is cleansed of its vices. Although in some places the influence of Bernar-

[1] Villari's *Savonarola*.

dino's preaching was more abiding than in others, this at least may be said of almost every town through which he passed. And the memory of what one man has effected in the past will add strength to those who have a yet harder task in a more corrupt age.

At Ferrara Bernardino had found himself on the frontier of the States of the Church. Early in 1424 he preached at Bologna, one of the most turbulent cities of those States. Later in the same year he was recalled thither by Bishop Albergati. Bologna was a city that had for some time cut itself away from the Papal States and proclaimed a republic. Martin V. had brought it back by force to its allegiance, but was far from having entirely subdued it. As in Ferrara the example of the court had led to one kind of vice, so at Bologna the disturbed condition of the town, almost continually engaged in some fresh revolt, had opened the door to another. The love of games of hazard had grown to an almost incredible extent, and Albergati, "one of the noblest and purest figures of the clergy of this time," having tried in vain to put a stop to it, and hearing of Bernardino's wonderful successes in Lombardy and Venetia, begged him to preach especially against this vice. Bernardino began without speaking directly of the question of gaming. Having gained the attention of his audience and roused all the town to interest in his sermons he announced one day that on the morrow he would speak of this subject. An immense crowd came together, so large that the Church of San Petronio would not hold them, and

a pulpit was raised in the square. So much did Bernardino's words move the people that bit by bit they brought him their cards and dice and by the end of Lent he had received so many that he made an immense bonfire in the square and set fire to it amid the applause of the people.

After this great and successful attack on the chief vice of Bologna, a certain man named Valerio came to Bernardino bitterly complaining that he had taken from him his only means of livelihood; for his work was that of painting playing cards, and for these there was no longer any sale. Bernardino for reply taking a pair of compasses traced a circle on a tablet and painted in it the monogram "I.H.S." surrounded by golden rays. "Do this," said he, "and you will earn the money necessary to you." The man obeyed and the people flocked to buy these little pictures in large crowds, so that he earned much more than he had done before.

Between these two visits to Bologna, Bernardino preached in Florence, the chief city of the Renaissance and Queen of Tuscany, then at the height of its glory. "In 1424," says Thureau Dangin, "at the moment at which Bernardino arrived, Brunelleschi was finishing the plans of the cupola of St. Maria del Fiore: Ghiberti had just finished the first door of the Baptistry, Donatello had already sculptured, several years since, the proud S. George of Orsanmichele, Masolino was beginning the frescoes of the Branacci chapel, and Massaccio was getting ready to complete them. The joys of this literary and artistic revival re-

placed in the Florentines of the 15th century the violent political passions of the preceding age."

There was indeed much more luxury than in the old Florence, "*sobria e pudica*" of early days, yet religion was still a strong force in the people, and in close union with their love of beauty. The enthusiastic and ardent race that had never listened unmoved to an appeal to the highest ideals of life was stirred now by Bernardino. "To good conduct and worthy of praise, he piously and with ease led back the Florentines."[1] Perhaps with too much ease: their noblest impulses passed quickly, and lack of stability was the chief cause of failures in the history of the people of Florence.

In the square of Santa Croce they raised a bonfire and burnt dice and cards and "vanities": on the Church of Santa Croce they painted the monogram of the Holy Name. And many years later, at the bidding of another friar, they raised larger bonfires to purify the city of greater evils, and proclaimed Christ their King. Did Savonarola remember Bernardino?

Fr. Amadio Maria, in telling the story of this visit to Florence, gives rather a quaint account of the reason for which the celebrated Poggio Bracciolino spoke so angrily of the coming of the friars: "*hos circulatores, hos molestos latratores.*"

"A citizen," he says, "called Charles de Ricasoli, having converted a country house which he possessed on the hill of Morticolo to which he gave the name of Monte Carlo, near the town of San Giovanni in Valdarno, into a small but neat

[1] Bernabæus Senensis.

monastery, gave it to the Saint as a dwelling place for himself and his pious brethren, who thereby drew on themselves much abuse from one Poggio, who saw himself disappointed of his hopes of inheriting it."

Poggio's own relations with S. Bernardino remained quite friendly throughout his life, but his annoyance was roused at the friars' strictness of life and morals and he hated their reforming zeal. He had memories too of meetings with other choice souls in these " pleasant regions meant for enjoyment crowded with every delight " which made him the more wroth that the miserable *frati* should possess Morticolo.

In the June of this year Bernardino was again preaching at Siena, and then in Rome where he caused the burning of two witches. The idea seems at first a startling one, but we learn that one of them confessed without torture to having murdered thirty little children by sucking their blood. Her name was Finicella, and S. Bernardino preached later at Siena of his satisfaction in having succeeded in bringing her to justice.

The Advent of this year (1424) Bernardino preached at Volterra, where we hear of his blessing the people after preaching, with the banner of the Holy Name—an action which was later to be brought up against him by his enemies. He went thence to Prato where he preached in 1425. Here he performed another of the miracles that are told with so much charm in the pages of every one of his early biographers.

As he was leaving the town surrounded by the

people, a bull, frightened by the immense crowd, attacked a young man who was left as if dead on the ground. Bernardino, hearing the cries of those near him came up. "The demon," said he, with a sigh, "wishes at this hour to ruin all the good God has done in this town." And then, making the sign of the Cross over the body he said: "By the Grace of God this young man shall have no hurt. Carry him away." And when they had gone only a few paces the young man got up strong and well.

How the memories of childhood must always have thronged round Bernardino when he turned his steps towards Siena. His love for the city is constantly shown in the sermons he preached there. "*Dilettissimi figliuoli*" he calls the people. "Alas, to whom am I speaking? I speak to my Siennese. O! if you could see my heart, I speak to you so tenderly and with so much love that seeing it you would believe me . . . I am indeed your very own, and speak to you with great affection."

And the people indeed received him as their own:[1] they crowded to listen to his words and hastened to obey, putting aside their hatreds and feuds. They burnt too their "vanities," in the Piazza del Campo. The rulers of the city passed decrees for the establishment of good morals which they called the *Riformagioni di frate Bernardino*. The whole city joined in a solemn procession led by the magistrates in honour of the Holy Name, bearing with them the banner that Bernardino

[1] *Senenses viri cunctusque populus laetissima fronte eum receperunt.* (Bernabæus.)

everywhere used, and the rayed "I.H.S." was painted on the Palazzo Publico itself, to keep in the minds of the people the memory of these events, and "to give solemn allegiance to the Name of Jesus."

When the time came for Bernardino to leave Siena, an immense crowd came with him on his way, weeping that he was going from them, and showing him every sign of love and veneration. In their midst he walked, his head bent, and signs of extreme grief in his face. His humility, his biographers tell us, was hurt by all the signs of homage paid to him. But may we not suppose that he grieved too to go from his dear city, and his "dearest children"?

For some time after leaving Siena Bernardino preached in the surrounding country, and came then to Arezzo—the last town he visited on Tuscan ground before passing over into Umbria.

Of Bernardino's visit to Arezzo a story is told of extraordinary interest as showing the traces of pagan times that still, as late as this, seemed to hang about parts of Italy.

About a mile away from the city of Arezzo was a certain spring called the *Fonte Tenta* which welled up beneath a mountain. To this spring many evil characters and weavers of spells, both men and women, came from all parts, and they declared that the water possessed a supernatural virtue. "But this," adds the chronicler,[1] "was rather the work of the devil through their charms

[1] *Life*, edited by Père d'Araules.

and invocations than through the natural virtue of the aforesaid water.

" And among other things which these pestiferous men and women did, if it happened that a boy a year or two old had some weakness and was brought to this spring by the aforesaid pestiferous men and women, they took him and plunged him into the water, cold beyond measure, whence the greater part of the boys who were brought died from the coldness of this water. But these perverse men and women declared that this happened by divine permission, and not by occasion of their perversity and the coldness of the water. And in this place almost every day these vile deeds were done and many other evil things wrought through the work of the ancient serpent. And this profane place was in such fame (albeit evil fame) that not only from near by but from far off parts noted evildoers came thither, and not only they but also many other divers unlearned and bestial persons seeking to be healed of various illnesses not fearing the Divine anger.

" Whence the mercy of heaven designing to attend to the matter and to put an end to the wiles and deceptions of the ancient serpent and to human malice and evil doing, breathed into the mind of Bernardino that he should go about that country preaching."

Seeing the evil that was done by means of this spring, Bernardino soon after his arrival at Arezzo began to preach vigorously against " all the pestiferous men and women and against all who permitted this." But the rulers and all the people of

the town, "because this place offered great advantages to many, rose up against the man of God . . . saying that Brother Bernardino was a man of Siena and a Ghibelline, an enemy to their city . . . and they drove him out of the city." And three years later the rulers having changed he came back and again urged the destruction of the fountain. And saying, "If any man be a Christian and a friend of God, let him follow me," Bernardino set out to destroy the spring. And when the work was first begun there arose a violent storm of wind and rain as if the spirit of the place were angry. But nothing daunted, Bernardino's followers began to dig seeking to find the source of the spring. And while they worked there was found in the city an old chronicle which related that the spring had been formerly dedicated to Apollo, and rose out of a "subterranean and profane place of the infidels after the fashion of a temple of idols. So they, persevering in the work they had begun for several days, found at length, as was told in the chronicle, a spacious and subterranean place in which by the lapse of time the water coming down from the mountain, at the foot of which was the said hollow place, had increased to such an extent that it had appeared above the surface of the earth in the mouth of the grotto, and that water was the said spring."

Bernardino then had the cave filled with earth and stones and caused the people to build there a chapel dedicated to Our Lady, "foreseeing that where iniquity had abounded, grace would superabound." And indeed this little chapel of S. Maria

delle Grazie, became afterwards the scene of many miracles.

To return to the year of Bernardino's first visit to Arezzo. The time had come round for the annual feast of St. Mary of the Angels or the *Portiuncula* (August 1st) to be kept at Assisi, and coming into Umbria he made his way there and preached on the feast day to an enormous crowd of pilgrims. He did not linger in this home of the *Poverello*, dear though it must have been to him from every sacred association, but went on as soon as the feast was over to Perugia, where his presence was greatly needed.

The whole of Umbria had been for years so much torn by international dissensions that we are told the people had almost ceased to give a thought to religion, justice and faith. In Perugia itself besides the factions, the preacher had to combat a widespread passion for gambling and an inordinate degree of luxury in dress and habits. Although the people came in large numbers to hear him Bernardino did not for some time feel that he was gaining a real hold or making a very deep impression on them. Determining to use strategy to gain them he told his hearers to come back again in a few days' time and to bring with them their friends as he was going to show them the devil. During the days that followed he fasted and added to his usual penances, and prayed much that he might win the people. And when the appointed time came a vast crowd collected to hear him in immense excitement and expectation.

"I will keep my promise," Bernardino said to

them, " for I will show you not one but many devils." And then in a powerful voice he cried out, " Look upon one another, and you will behold devils who do the work of the devil. For it is written in the Holy Gospel that by their fruits or works you shall know them."

Now he held their attention, and by the sermon that followed so powerfully moved them that the people came to him in crowds bringing dice and " vanities " to be destroyed. Enemies sought one another's forgiveness, often with ropes round their necks, and so great a change was worked in the town that Bernardino spoke of it later to the people of Siena as the city most after his own heart because it was the purest, telling his fellow-citizens, " There is as much difference between you and the Perugians as between earth and heaven."

So great a number of " vanities " and gaming implements were collected that the people made of them two large " castles " in the square, and placing at the top of one a figure of the devil set alight to them. The magistrates passed several laws to make the reformation lasting and to these laws gave the name of *Statuta Sancti Bernardini*.

Yet we hear that a few years later there was at any rate a partial falling back, for the factions again broke out and Bernardino hearing of this hastened to Perugia. Having preached four sermons and again won his hearers' full attention he proposed that all those who were on the side of peace should come to his right hand and that those who refused peace and would not obey his words should go to his left. The whole crowd came to

the preacher's right with the exception of one young man of noble family who with his attendants remained on the left murmuring against the friar. Bernardino turning to him said:

"Thou art there alone on thy side despising with proud obstinacy the counsels which by the command of God I give to this people. I exhort thee anew in the name of God to pardon others from the bottom of thy heart the evils they have done to thee or thy family and then to come over to my right. If you resist me rest assured thou wilt not again enter thy house alive."

The young man laughing at the preacher's words turned back towards his house, but as he reached the threshold he was struck down by a sudden illness and died before he could enter.

In 1426 Bernardino came to Viterbo there to preach the Lent. The crowd was so immense that he was obliged to leave the church and preach in the piazza. Heaps of "vanities" were burnt and the whole of the city seemed moved with repentance through the influence of his sermons and their love of the preacher. At this time his influence in all Italy seemed at its height, and the good he did unparalleled. Yet a year after this Lent at Viterbo came, suddenly as a burst of thunder in a clear sky, a summons to Rome to answer a charge of heresy.

CHAPTER VI.

ACCUSATION AND ACQUITTAL.

THE devotion to the Holy Name preached by Bernardino was in no sense a new one. Established by St. Paul's words, "In the Name of Jesus, let every knee bow," it is found in use in the earliest days of Christianity. The Emperor Justinian says in his law-book, "In the Name of our Lord Jesus we begin all our consultations."

Among the saints who lived before Bernardino St. Bernard and St. Bonaventure both had an especial love for this devotion. And it is an interesting fact that Gregory IX, after the Council of Lyons, 1271, entrusted to John of Vercelli, the General of the Dominican Order, the task of preaching devotion to the Holy Name. This devotion was especially urged on the faithful at this Council in reparation for the insults offered to the Name of Jesus by the Albigenses. In every Dominican church it was directed that an altar to the Holy Name should be raised and a Society established to honour it, and down to the present day this Society continues and the devotion is preached by the Dominicans.

Those who attacked Bernardino did not accuse him of teaching a new doctrine, but of teaching it in a novel and dangerous manner.

"At the same time," says M. Thureau Dangin, "that under the influence of Bernardino the devotion to the Name of Jesus had spread widely, the

new forms of this devotion, notably the exhibition and veneration of tablets on which were painted the letters of the sacred Name, had disquieted the minds of some. This practice appeared to them to tend to superstition or even to idolatry: it was to be feared according to them, that the people should see in the tablet a sort of charm, and should adore the object itself."

The chief point on which they based their attacks was his habit of making the people kneel down after his sermons, and blessing them with the banner on which the "I.H.S." was painted. They declared that he caused the people in their ignorance to adore this banner instead of looking on it simply as an emblem. And it is possible that some of Bernardino's followers in their zeal to spread the devotion neglected the precautions the saint himself took, for we hear of processions arranged by them in which this new emblem was given precedence of the crucifix. "You should adore," said Bernardino himself to the people, "not the sign, but that which is signified, for the Name of Jesus signifies for you Saviour, Redeemer and Son of God."

The accusations which misrepresented Bernardino's teaching were made chiefly by the followers of Manfred of Vercelli, who claimed to have collected from his sermons propositions against the faith, and drawing up an appeal to the Pope against him thought thus to avenge their leader for Bernardino's opposition. But they were joined by Andrea de Bigli, a learned religious of the Hermits of St. Augustin, who was no friend to

Manfred, but believing the preacher to be spreading superstitious teaching threw the weight of his authority on the side of his enemies.

Much fuller details of this time of trial than were to be found in any other life of St. Bernardino appeared in a Latin MS. of the 15th century, published for the first time in 1906, by Père d'Araules, O.F.M. (and in the *Anal. Boll.*), from which I have already largely quoted. This account claims to have been written by a friar who was persuaded by St. Bernardino to embrace the religious life, was for some time at least, his companion, and heard from his own lips the narration of the facts he sets down. It is in the main from this document that the following account of this period of Bernardino's life is taken, though a few details are added from other biographers. It may be noted that in presenting dialogues between actors in the different scenes this Life tends to emphasize what they said in the extreme of admiration, indignation, &c. It is probably rather the spirit of what Martin, Manfred or Bernardino must have felt than their *ipsissima verba* that the teller of the story narrates.

Martin V was then Pope, and to him Bernardino's opponents addressed themselves, "Satan," says one old chronicler, "bringing it about from envy of the man of God, and unable to endure the salvation of the peoples." "O immortal God!" another cries out, "how great was their calumny and how very difficult was it for him to escape from their inextricable net!" "There is," said his enemy, "a certain friar, Bernardino by name, sprung from

Siena, an ignorant man of the Friars Minor, who goes about the cities and towns of Italy with his inventions and novelties, and above all he speaks about a monogram of Jesus gilded and painted which he shows to the peoples publicly and causes them to go astray . . . This man deserves punishment by fire for his false opinion and teaching. It, therefore, behoves the seat of the Apostles to see to this matter, for if nothing is done the greatest scandal will arise."

The Pope was much troubled by these accusations, and issued at once an Apostolic Brief commanding Bernardino to appear before him without delay. It is not known exactly when or where he received the summons but he hastened at once to obey it, and on his way came again to Viterbo, where he had been preaching the year before and where he rested a little while.

The splendid simplicity of Bernardino may be seen in the words of his farewell to the people of Viterbo. We may see clearly too the prevalent attitude in the Middle Ages towards such matters, a knowledge of which is essential to the right understanding of them.

Bernardino trusted indeed that he would be cleared of the charge of heresy—yet if it were proved against him he would seem to have had no thought that the terrible punishment was other than just. Heresy which injured the souls of men and threatened to destroy the unity of Christendom was a most grievous sin and punishable by Church and State, the laws of which were practically inseparable. The unity of Christendom was the most

precious of all treasures, and the rending of this seamless garment was a far greater crime than any sin of one individual man against another.

Bernardino then (says his biographer) "*incidenter subintulit*—'I go to Rome to be burnt with fire, and you will remain in the enjoyment of peace and tranquillity; for they say I am a heretic and the opinion is strongly held in the city (of Rome) that I ought to be burnt. Wherefore,' added the innocent and humble man, 'I beg you to pray for me to God Almighty.'"

And then he mounted his ass and, since it was the beginning of summer, set out by night towards Rome. And the people of Viterbo finding him gone, went forth in the early morning, a vast crowd, to follow him. And they found him resting under a tree some distance away. And he said to them, "Most dear friends, whither do you journey?" And they said: "In life and in death we are ready to follow thee." In vain did Bernardino try to persuade them to go back, saying, "Nay, in no wise, but go back rather to your own affairs," and thanking them, he added, "May God reward you." But they said, "We will not go back at all, for we are bent on seeing the end of thy difficulties." "Do not do this my sons," he replied, "for it will all be laid at my door and my enemies may publish against me that I wished to protect myself with your good-will. Wherefore your coming, as far as it concerns me, is not pleasing to me." They however insisted, saying, "We will go before thee, Father." And he said, "Indeed, it is not well either that you should go before or follow."

Plain as Bernardino tried to make it to them that he really did not want them, the people of Viterbo were not to be discouraged, but "bidding him farewell and being exceedingly set on fire with courage and fervour of spirit they went before the man of God and betook themselves to Rome."

And when the Romans saw this crowd of men they wondered and said, "What is this and what do they want?" And they answered, "We have heard how you call Brother Bernardino a heretic, and worthy of death." And the Romans hearing the name of blessed Bernardino said, "Let him come, let him come and be burnt." The people of Viterbo then grew angry and exclaimed, "You were always evil and without fear of God, and persecutors of the servants and friends of God." And for some days, we are told, they contended in this fashion, and then finding they did no good, Bernardino's defenders returned to Viterbo and the saint came alone to Rome. He sought the house of a prelate, a great friend of his. This man knew all that was urged against him and day and night helped his friend, besieging the Roman Curia with entreaties to free him from this persecution. He sought too the Pope with whom Bernardino's enemies had already been busy, who exclaimed, "Where is this seducer, this Brother Bernardino?" adding, "directly he comes I will take care to punish him."

The prelate however, persuaded Pope Martin to give the friar an early opportunity to defend his doctrine in what would be called to-day a private audience. Many learned men and doctors of the

Order had hastened to Rome to the defence of their preacher, but Bernardino refused their help, saying, "I return immeasurable thanks, but it is not well, Fathers, that you should be thus burdened in this matter. And without doubt He Who has said: '*Aperi os tuum et implebo illud*,' will Himself be my helper, for everything I have spoken I have spoken for the honour of His Name."

On the appointed day then Bernardino, alone, save for his friend, the above-mentioned prelate, presented himself before the Pope and defended himself with such humility and reverence, yet with so much eloquence, such happy choice of words, and such profound knowledge of the Scriptures, that the Holy Father exclaimed in astonishment: "Indeed, I was ill-informed when I sent for this man. For I see and hear that he is a venerable religious, and worthy of all praise and protection and favour. Some told me that he was exceedingly ignorant, and deceived the souls of simple people throughout the world by inventions, deceptions and novelties, and above all by discoursing about a certain newly invented form of the Name of Jesus (*de quodam nomine Jesu noviter invento*)."[1] And then Pope Martin added, "Go in peace. For I have greatly rejoiced in thy presence and thou hast spoken well and clearly about thy business. Wherefore with all diligence *predica verbum Dei, insta oportune, importune*. For the rest, fear not, and complete what thou hast begun. And if thou

[1] This probably refers, not only to the banner "I.H.S.," but also to the fact that Matthew of Sicily, one of S. Bernardino's followers, insisted on the Name being written "Jhesus" (See Ferrers Howell, pp. 153-5).

desirest to ask anything from the Seat of the Apostles, fear not; for I am ready in all things alike to help and do thee favour."

Bernardino realising that while the accusation had been public he had as yet been only privately acquitted, spoke as follows:

"I return boundless thanks to Almighty God and to you most Holy Father, His most worthy Vicar. Trusting in your kindness and well-proved clemency and your most generous, free and thankworthy offer, I have flung myself at your blessed feet, and only one thing I ask—and do not refuse me. I ask that in your presence and in that of your most honoured College of all the Cardinals, and with all the people who now reside in your Curia attending, I may be worthy to declare to these said hearers whatever I have spoken to your Holiness."

"So be it," Martin replied, and appointed a day for the solemn hearing of the cause.

Meanwhile John Capistran, the intimate friend and disciple of Bernardino, who had been preaching at Naples when the trouble first arose, directly he heard of it left Naples and hastened to Aquila to collect the papers needed for Bernardino's defence. He then set out at once for Rome.

The relations between these two men were close and intimate. Although St. John was only five years the younger he had studied theology under St. Bernardino, for he entered the cloister only in 1417. The younger saint called himself the disciple of the elder and for some time followed him to learn his method in preaching; afterwards en-

tering into a close friendship they agreed for their mutual profit each to obey the other in turns for three years. One of the earliest Lives of St. Bernardino is attributed to this friend, who was now hastening towards Rome in the hope of arriving in time to plead for him. He reached Rome the very day appointed for the public hearing of the cause and at the gate of the city fastened a banner with the Holy Name painted thereon to the point of a spear and rode in bearing it aloft. He had arrived alone at the gate but as he passed through the streets more and more people joined him so that at the doors of the Vatican he bore his banner at the head of an immense concourse of people all singing hymns in praise of the Holy Name.

So great a sensation was caused by the unexpected appearance of this gallant champion that the Pope and Cardinals after consulting together resolved to defer the trial to another day for fear lest the opponents of Bernardino should be insulted by the people whom Capistran had so moved in his favour.

On the appointed day, then, Bernardino and his friends, St. John Capistran and Fr. Matthew of Sicily, stood against many accusers—according to some accounts over fifty learned theologians of different Orders being opposed to them. St. John Capistran met and answered numerous objections to his friend's doctrine, and triumphantly cleared it on every point. A book in which Bernardino had collected certain sermons was then brought forward and with the agreement of all the Cardinals

and prelates then residing in the Roman Curia, received the Apostolic sanction.

Nothing could have been more open and complete than this vindication of Bernardino's doctrine. "His adversary and accuser," says the chronicler, "sought flight out of the city in confusion: he who formerly, as the saint's accuser, had hastened thither." Martin requested Bernardino to stay in Rome to preach, beginning in St. Peter's, and the saint preached in all 114 sermons in the city, at some of which the Pope and Cardinals were present. In a further audience the day after the public trial, he received Pope Martin's blessing on his preaching, and especially on his spreading the devotion to the Holy Name, which was thus approved three several times. Surely it might have been said then, if ever, *Roma locuta est: causa finita est.* Yet we find that on the death of Martin, Bernardino's accusers reappeared. Not daring on this occasion to repair directly to Rome, they opposed him first at Siena, whither the saint immediately returned, and with quiet firmness refuted their attacks. They next won over the Inquisitor Ludovico Pisano to their cause, and succeeded in getting from him an order for the effacing of the monogram of the Holy Name erected by Bernardino in the church at Bologna. But on this coming to the ears of Pope Eugenius he wrote to the Inquisitor blaming him severely for having taken this step and ordering him to restore the monogram to its place above the altar without, however, effacing the crucifix that had been painted in its stead. His directions were not at once obeyed so

two more letters followed, repeating the same orders more forcibly. These letters were addressed to the rectors of the Church of St. Petronius, to the Magistrates and Prefect of Justice of the State of Bologna, and to the Inquisitor who had taken action in the matter. Space does not allow the text of more than the first of these letters to be quoted:

"*Dilecti filii salutem, etc.* We have just received and fully understood your letter concerning what has been done in erasing the Name of Jesus painted on a certain board in letters of gold, what followed thereupon and what may follow. We were greatly displeased on reflecting how lightly this has appeared to be done concerning which the Seat of the Apostles ought certainly to have been consulted as to what measures it judged should be taken, as the matter is a very grave one and how many scandals may arise therefrom! Wherefore, many things being considered, We wish and it is Our intention that above the image of the Crucifix on the aforesaid board, the painted Name of Jesus, in size conformable to the picture of the Crucifix, should be solemnly painted anew, as formerly in letters of gold. But should only a small space be left above so that this conformity cannot be effected, let another picture be made where the image of the Crucifix and the Name of Jesus painted above may be conformable in size and let it be placed above the altar where it was formerly. And this We desire and command to be observed until the result of further deliberation shall be manifested. Given at Rome at St.

Peter's, under the seal of the Prince of the Apostles on the first day of July in the first year of Our pontificate. To Our beloved sons the officers of the Church of St. Petronius at Bologna."

This attempt having failed, the enemies of Bernardino next persuaded Michael Plebano, Promoter of the Faith, to take against him those secret proceedings which Martin V had conceded to the Promoter in cases of heresy. They procured that the Judgment should be entrusted to Cardinal John de Casanova of the Dominican Order, who was already biassed against Bernardino, and who, having heard certain false witnesses produced by Michael, summoned him on November 24, 1431, to appear before him, where he was received with the most severe affronts and injustice. All this had been carried out with so much secrecy that no word of it had come to the ears of the Pope, but now Bernardino's friends began to move, and the Siennese entrusted to Cardinal Cassini an embassage to the Holy Father on his behalf. Pope Eugenius was much angered by the conduct of Bernardino's accusers, and in January, 1432, issued a Bull in his defence, by which he annulled the entire proceedings against him, announcing that the matter had gone forward without his knowledge or desire, that false witnesses had been called, and that he knew without possibility of doubt from serious testimony that Bernardino was not only a pious man living a life worthy of all praise, but also an ardent opponent of heresy, and an illustrious and irreproachable doctor. " Above all he adheres, with all his strength to the traditions and doctrine

of the Roman Church, of the sovereign Pontiffs, of the doctors, and of the Fathers, teaches and preaches all that this same Holy Church, the Mother of others, commands and teaches, swerves from it on no point, draws the faithful to obey as he obeys himself with humility her precepts and her commands, as also Our own. Desirous then, of seeing this same Bernardino apply himself to his holy preaching and other divine works with the more liberty, that he will be more entirely sheltered from the odious attacks of which We have spoken . . . with a perfect knowledge of this cause, of these insinuations, of the origin of the means employed in this affair . . .We hereby abolish, break and declare null all these things."

Rome, twice tried, both in the Pontificate of Martin V and in that of Eugenius IV, had proved to be wholly on the saint's side. His enemies repulsed in that direction, made in 1438 one more attempt to injure his fair name, addressing themselves to the Council of Basle then in contest with Eugenius. The Council forwarded the accusation to Duke Philip of Milan, where Bernardino was then preaching, that he might enquire into the matter. The Duke, who held the saint in high esteem, summoned a Council of learned men, who triumphantly acquitted him. Philip then sent their opinion to Basle, enclosing for confirmation the letters of Eugenius to Bologna, and saying, "We know that he has been falsely defamed to you, for, already a long time since, this attack is said to have been weighed and brought to nought at the Seat of the Apostles, and above all concerning the Name of Jesus."

CHAPTER VII.

"BISHOP OF EVERY CITY OF ITALY."

IN so short a book in which of necessity everything is a good deal compressed, it has seemed best to speak in one place of trials stretching over many years.

We must now return to the time in Rome when the saint, first publicly acquitted, took up again with the blessing of the Holy See his missionary labours. Bernardino stayed in Rome eighty days and during that time preached by his own calculation 114 sermons. In Rome as elsewhere he had wonderful success in bringing peace and abolishing the murderous factions. One abuse in particular had until his coming been the cause of much bloodshed. If a man killed another and managed to escape to his own house, the law allowed him to bar himself in and stay there safely until the relations of the victim, breaking in, forced the stronghold: this led to fresh murders and confirmed deadly feud between the two families. This evil custom Bernardino completely abolished, and caused the bars to be destroyed before every house. His biographers tell too how he burnt a heap of dice, cards, gaming tables, evil songs, charms and writings concerning the black arts.

Among several miracles told of the time in Rome is this:[1] As the saint was much weakened by his

[1] Alessio gives this story of this visit to Rome and Thureau Dangin follows him, but Mr. Ferrers Howell places it in the visit of 1424.

toils and austerities a certain pious lady sent him an aromatic confection which she hoped might strengthen him. Bernardino declaring that he had no need of it sent the messenger to a certain street where, he said, "You will find a man very ill; give it to him and say, 'Brother Bernardino sends you this confection that you may take it in the Name of Christ and be cured.'" And indeed directly the sick man had taken the confection he rose from his bed in good health.

In the Name of Jesus Bernardino worked his miracles; for that Name he had suffered, that Name it was above all the work of his life to exalt and glorify. "O! Thou Name of Jesus!" he cried in one of his sermons, "exalted above every name. O! triumphant Name. O! Joy of Angels and of the just. O! fear of Hell! In Thee is all hope of pardon, of grace and of glory. O! most sweet Name. Thou givest pardon to sinners. Thou dost renew us. Thou dost fill our hearts with divine sweetness and dost drive out our fears. O! Name full of grace. Through Thee is attained the insight into great mysteries and souls are set afire with divine love, are strengthened in their combats and delivered from all evils."

What wonder then, that those in Rome who heard him preach of this Name tell that they saw It appear above his head, in fashion as he was wont to have it painted, encircled with bright rays?

Although this devotion as we have seen had been among the earliest in the Church, yet at the time just before Bernardino's preaching began, it had rather fallen into disuse. But from the moment

of his first approval by Pope Martin it began to revive and spread widely. By Bernardino's efforts the custom of adding the Name of Jesus in the Hail Mary to St. Elizabeth's Salutation spread throughout Italy and thence to the Universal Church. St. John Capistran followed Bernardino in showing Its banner to the people in Italy, France and Germany, and he advanced with Hunyades against the Turks, calling on the Holy Name.

Bernardino himself is supposed to have begun the Office of the Name of Jesus which was finished by one of his disciples, Bernardino de Busti, and in 1530 the Feast was granted to the Friars Minor by Clement VII. By 1722, it had extended to the Universal Church and was fixed for the second Sunday after the Epiphany.

St. Colette took the Name of Jesus as her motto in her reform of the Franciscan Order, and the very monogram which Bernardino himself had used was adopted later by the Jesuits with the addition of the Cross and three nails as the emblem of their Society.

Bernardino's work in the revival and spread of this devotion is then fitly shown by the legend on all the old drawings of him "*Manifestavi nomen tuum hominibus.*" Or in the quaint words of Ugolino, summing up his work, "Bernardino went swiftly through Italy carrying Jesus."

While he preached in Rome an embassy came from Siena begging Bernardino to be their bishop. The Pope, sending for him, told him of their choice and his own approval, but Bernardino at once refused the honour saying: "God has not sent me

to baptize but to preach the Gospel, and I hold that it is better for me to teach the Gospel to all the earth than to enclose myself within the limits of a single bishopric. As to the pomp and honours of the episcopate, I reject them, and I would rather suffer want with the poor than be honoured with wealthy prelates. I feel I am not made for the innumerable cares of such a charge, and in the humble state I have chosen by God's inspiration I can better hold to what I have promised."

The Sees of Urbino and Ferrara were later offered to Bernardino and refused by him. In the *Acta Sanctorum* may be seen an old drawing of the friar, holding aloft the sign of the Holy Name, and by his side three mitres are drawn. For the artist would not have us forget that the refusal of so much glory on earth added to the crown of heavenly glory preparing for the follower of the *Poverello*.

In the same spirit is the story of Bernardino's conversation with a poor lay-Brother to whom he told the news that the Siennese had chosen him for their bishop. Did Brother Angelo think, he asked, that he ought to accept their election. "No," the Brother answered, "No, Father, do not lose in a moment thy labours in teaching the people, and the fruits which thou hast gathered from them, for a vain good of so little weight—a false good." "What should I do then," Bernardino asked, "if the people of Milan, who honour and love me more than any others, should wish me for their archbishop?" "Indeed," said the Brother, "as this is the greater honour I think it should be refused

the more courageously, unless thou wishest to cast eternal dishonour on thyself and all others who may come to preach after thee."

"What if the Pope should name me patriarch? Thinkest thou I should not gladly accept it?" "I see," said the Brother, much grieved, "that thy mind is inclined to these vain goods of the world, for which thou wilt lose the love of the people which thou hast gained by such efforts, and what is more, God's Grace." "And if I am made Cardinal, dost thou think that a matter to neglect?" The mention of so high a dignity was too much for poor Brother Angelo. After a moment's thought he said, "Yes, Father, thou hast no time to lose; who would refuse so high an honour? Take off thy little cord and do as thou wilt."

At this point Bernardino thought that the joke must be carried no further, so—as we may suppose to Angelo's great bewilderment—he turned and reproved him, saying that the higher the dignity the more steadfastly it should be refused. "As for me," he said, "I am resolved to refuse not only the bishopric, patriarchate and cardinalate, but also the Papacy itself, and I find myself much richer and happier in the poor and humble life of St. Francis than in the highest positions."

Joking with his brethren on the same subject, Bernardino exclaimed, "They do me an injury to press on me the bishopric of a single city, when I am received and visited wherever I go with as much respect as if I were a dignitary of the Church; surely it is better to be considered bishop of every Italian city than of one."

Word came to Bernardino that he was wanted in his native city, for during his absence the factions had broken out once more in Siena. After a short visit to Florence he arrived there in August and preached on the Feast of the Assumption the first of the 45 sermons that form the volumes of the famous *Prediche Volgari*. Again peace and holy living were brought back by his words to the people whom in all Italy he loved the best, and held above all as his own children. Again, by decrees of reform the magistrates confirmed his words.

The next four years were passed in missionary journeyings from town to town, of which it would be difficult to follow the course at all precisely. The saint's early biographers are generally content to tell us that he went chiefly to the towns that most needed him, sometimes visiting places before unknown to him, at others going back to those where he had preached formerly.

In 1429 he preached in Venice and again in Rome.

A story may here be told of uncertain date given in the anonymous friar's biography, edited by Père d'Araules, concerning a visit of St. Bernardino to Corneto.

" In Corneto, in the heritage of St. Peter and the land of the Church, when this holy man was preaching there on the day of the Lord's Ascension in the morning about sunrise it began to rain. And this sight frightened all. And he said, ' Behold, I, like you, am in the rain, let no one withdraw hence, but let us all say Our Father and Hail Mary

that God may be mindful of us from on high, and may show us His brightness.' Whence, all kneeling down, made the said prayer and at once the rain ceased.

"There was also near by a certain wretched cottage with one inhabitant and with a certain little orchard where dwelt many hens and cocks, and because it was in the morning at the hour of their rising, these animals arising cried out and vociferated according to their custom to such an extent and in such a way that the man of God could not go forward in his discourse. Whence therefore the man of God admonished them that they should no longer cry out or vociferate lest the divine word should be hindered. And when he had thus spoken, wonderful thing, at once they became silent, and kept quiet where they found themselves, some on walls, some on trees, some on bushes, and thus they stayed until the end of the preaching. Whence (we may see) that as that man was obedient to his Creator, so the elements and the animals were subject to his command."

In 1431 Bernardino heard that the peace of his native city was again threatened, though not this time by civil troubles. The Siennese had entered into an alliance with Visconti and had agreed to march on Florence, and to menace the States of the Church. He hastened at once to Siena, and tried to persuade them to give up the war and break off their alliance with Milan, but his efforts were in this instance unsuccessful.

At Siena we again find him in 1432, when Sigismund King of the Romans came to that town

on his way to Rome where he hoped to be consecrated Emperor. Sigismund tarried in Siena nine months negotiating with the Pope and formed a strong attachment for the friar whom he persuaded in the following April to go with him to Rome.

"No men," says Montalembert, "have ever shown less terror of the strongest, less weak complacence towards power, than the monks . . . the men who of all others spoke with the greatest freedom to kings."

Bernardino's friendship with the Duke of Milan was based on this freedom and independence and it was no less shown in his intercourse with Sigismund, whom he freely counselled for his own good and that of the Church. And on his side the Emperor called a day on which he had not seen Bernardino a day without light.

During the pomp and splendours of the coronation ceremony the friar spent his time in preaching in the different quarters of Rome. And when Sigismund departed Bernardino agreed to go with him as far as the borders of Tuscany. The sombre dress of the friar in the midst of the splendid retinue of the newly-crowned emperor was no unusual sight in the Middle Ages.

And again in contrast to the glare of the court comes the quiet of Capriola set among the hills whither Bernardino, having taken leave of Sigismund, went to collect and revise his sermons and be for a while at peace among his brethren.

For two years he was employed in this task—these sermons written in Latin are not identical with any actually preached but rather a storehouse of

thought and doctrine for the writer himself and others to draw from as they chose. He wrote them, Vespasiano da Bisticci says, "in such a fashion that most of the brethren of the Observance of that Order follow the style of St. Bernardino." Another object too probably moved him, that of making his doctrine so clear to all that it could not be again distorted as it had been before the double approval of the Holy See. The sermons circulated fast and widely and were used by preachers in Italy itself and also in France, Spain, Germany and the East. Père de la Haye, O.F.M., in the 17th century published all he could collect of these sermons and they have probably been more widely read than the Italian works.

But the *Prediche Volgari* have what these sermons lack—the moving eloquence of the orator, the power of the spoken word over that which is written. In them we have what else had been wanting, a clear picture of the friar himself as he went through the towns and villages of Italy preaching and teaching and laying a healing touch alike on the bodies of men and on their souls.

CHAPTER VIII.

OBSERVANTS AND CONVENTUALS.

To go back a little, it is probable that in 1430 Bernardino was present at the Chapter General of the friars at which were drawn up the *Statuta Martiniana*. These constitutions represented an attempt on the part of Pope Martin to deal with the difficulties caused by the immense spread of the Observance movement among the Franciscans.

The early history of the Observance was told in a previous chapter, and we have seen it spreading in proportion to the success of Bernardino's preaching. But its further history in these years must be slightly traced that it may be understood how far it had developed, and what its relation was with the entire Order at the time of this Chapter.

By 1405 the Strict Observance had, as we have seen, conquered its right to live and was looked on in quite a friendly light by the Conventuals. This is clearly shown by the fact that Bernardino himself, in that year, was permitted, and even encouraged, by his superiors, to leave the Conventual house of Siena for the Observant convent of Columbaio. But indeed the Observants in Italy, then numbering only 130 friars in all, seemed almost a negligible quantity to their superiors who were the more ready to make concessions in their favour.

We have seen how in this same year Bernardino built the Capriola convent and how from the

moment he began to preach, convents of the Observance sprang up in every town of Italy—at Milan, Pavia, Bergamo, Brescia, Florence and others too many to name. And not only did he cause new convents to be founded, but in every town in which he tarried he laboured to bring the Conventuals themselves to join the Observance—often with wonderful success. In Venice, to give but one instance, of the three Franciscan convents in the town, two were gained to the side of reform.

Pope Martin V showed himself favourable to this attempt to bring about quietly and peacefully a greater strictness in the Order, and granted to Bernardino several Briefs for the foundation of new friaries. And Bernardino's hands were further strengthened by the accession of three men, all of whom were to do great things for the Order: St. John Capistran, St. James della Marca, and Brother Albert of Sarteano.

In 1427 the tide of his extraordinary success received a momentary check in the accusations of heresy directed against its author; Bernardino's complete vindication from these charges gave it however an even greater impetus than before.

But the more striking the growth of the reforming party, the more the difficulty increased of reconciling it with the unity of the Order. This difficulty was at first met in Italy by the appointment of Vicars chosen by the Minister General from the ranks of the Observants. In 1430 Martin V convoked this general Chapter of the Order at Assisi "in order that our desire for a general reform of the Order may be fulfilled." Both sides

agreed to make concessions, the Observants to relinquish their vicars, the Conventuals to keep the Rule more strictly. The *Statuta Martiniana* were drawn up and St. John Capistran appointed *Socius* to help the Minister in enforcing them.

All the friars, both Conventual and Observant, swore to obey these Constitutions, but in the same year some of the Conventuals persuaded the Pope to relax the Constitutions and release them from their oaths. This relaxation was most disadvantageous to the Observants, and, on the accession of Pope Eugenius IV in the following year, St. John Capistran persuaded him to repeal the relaxations and to allow the Observants once more to hold their separate Chapter and to choose their own vicars as they had done before the Chapter at Assisi. Eugenius was himself a Pope of reforming zeal and anxious to foster the movement in every way in his power. In this same year he asked the friars of the Observance to choose six among them to be put at his disposal for any work in which he should wish to employ them. Among the six chosen were St. John Capistran (a personal friend of the Pontiff's) and Brother Albert of Sarteano. St. John Eugenius employed in Italy, and Albert he sent to the East to take steps towards the healing of the Great Schism.

Pope Martin had given to the Observants the custody of the Holy Mount of the Stigmata, and Eugenius in 1434 gave them the government of the Franciscan convents in the Holy Land which had been badly administered by the Conventuals.

Yet it remained a difficulty that the large and

increasing number of Observant convents in Italy were empowered to choose their own vicars, while these vicars were all under a Conventual Minister General. This difficulty Pope Martin had tried to cope with in his Constitutions, but unsuccessfully. It became more and more necessary that there should be someone directly over the Provincial Vicars, and in 1438 at the suggestion of St. John Capistran, the Minister General (confirmed by Eugenius) appointed Bernardino as Vicar and Commissary of the Observance throughout Italy. Having been unwillingly compelled to undertake this office Bernardino carried it out with the utmost vigour, visiting the different provinces and convents to reform or encourage.

During these years (1430-8) there had been few important events in the life of St. Bernardino outside his relations with the Order excepting his friendship with Sigismund, but in 1438 he attended the Council of Ferrara, and in 1439, when its session was by the Pope's order transferred to Florence, he went thither.

A story of this date shows the discretion which with Bernardino always went hand in hand with zeal. During his absence the brethren of La Capriola had admitted a youth of Siena to the Order against the wish of his relations. An autograph letter of Bernardino from Florence to the Government of Siena apologizes for the action of the friars, whom he at once ordered to send the boy back to Siena.

In 1440 Bernardino again visited Rome and also inaugurated a school of theology at Perugia.

He urgently opposed a commonly received opinion that study was contrary to the spirit of humility and of the Franciscan Order. He wished for men of learning among the friars, and encouraged St. John Capistran to publish his treatise *De promovendo studio inter Minores*.

In this year he issued from Assisi certain authoritative interpretations of the rule, and also implored to be allowed to resign his vicariate. Pope Eugenius would not accept his resignation, but allowed him to appoint a coadjutor and he chose St. John Capistran.

It might be seen that the disciple of peace did not hesitate to urge men to fight bravely in a just war, for the people of Florence attributed their victory over Piccinino and his *condottiere* in the June of this year, to Bernardino's urgent counsel that they should advance against the enemy imploring God's help.

In 1441 Bernardino was preaching at Cortona when the whole town was thrown into a great state of excitement by the return of Albert of Sarteano from the East. Bernardino and he met about a mile from the town. Bernardino was riding a little donkey, for his infirmities had obliged him to give up going everywhere on foot. Albert, as the Pope's emissary, was mounted on a fine horse and surrounded by an immense crowd flocking to welcome him and pressing near to kiss his garments. Fearing for Albert's humility in the midst of such a reception Bernardino called out to him: "Albert, my brother, look to thy footsteps, remember death and beware lest men exalt thee more than is fitting."

Albert on hearing the voice of the man, to him at once brother and father, sprang to the ground, and running embraced Bernardino, begging him to take his horse and let him mount on the donkey.

" No," replied Bernardino, " it is fitting that we should travel thus differently; but have a care lest vain glory slip furtively into thy heart and snatch away the reward of such great labours." " My father," replied Albert, " do not be uneasy, in the midst of honours I have without ceasing prayed to God, ' Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to Thy Name be the glory.' "

In 1442 Bernardino's earnest desire to resign his post of Vicar General of the Observants was at last acceded to by the Pope. In this year there was cause for fresh hope of re-uniting the whole Order. Albert of Sarteano was chosen Minister of the Province of St. Anthony in place of a Conventual. The Pope thereupon made him Vicar General of the whole Order, hoping that at the next Chapter he would be chosen Minister General by Conventuals and Observants alike.

Meanwhile Bernardino retired again to Capriola where Albert made him his commissary. And here there befell him a very great grief in the loss of Brother Vincent, his friend and companion of twenty-four years to whom he had told all his closest secrets.

While Vincent was dying " he did not cease weeping and mourning, and when asked why he was thus sad, the brethren who assisted him being not a little astonished thereat, as these good friars were wont all to die in gladness, he replied that

he did not weep from fear, or was loth to die, but from sorrow to see himself thus dying before Bernardino, because the virtues and marvellous graces which abounded in the saint's soul would thus be buried with him: whereas, if he could only have outlived him a day he would be released from the obligation which Bernardino had imposed on him of being silent on this point during his life, and would have disclosed to the world things regarding the saint which would have filled everyone with amazement and admiration."

And while Vincent grieved for the loss to his Order and to the world of his intimate knowledge of a great saint, Bernardino was filled with a profound sorrow at the death of this dearly loved brother and faithful counsellor, and followed his body to the grave with such torrents of tears streaming from his eyes that those who stood by were, we are told, very much astonished. Bernardino was writing at the time his sermons on the Beatitudes, and on reaching "Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted," he broke into a "pious lamentation on the death of Brother Vincent my most faithful and most dear companion," in which he expressed his depth of grief and defended himself for weeping for his loss. A few short extracts must be given from this moving lament, which is the more interesting from its intense and human sense of loss coming so near the end of the saint's own life.

"I ask myself why we loved each other and why then we have left each other? O hard necessity, not for thee but for me. For O my brother,

if thou hast left dear friends I believe that thou hast found dearer still . . . Instead of myself, poor and wretched, thou rejoicest in the presence of Christ and mingling with the choir of angels feelest no grief for my absence. But what find I in thy stead? How happy I should be to know if now thou dost think of me, thy faithful friend, tottering to-day in the midst of trials and weaned from thy support, rod of my weakness! I should be happy to know if in the bosom of an abyss of light and plunged in eternal happiness, it is still allowed thee to think of the miseries of this world. Thy love I know has not grown less. It has only changed: the sight of God cannot have made thee careless in our regard, for God himself has care of us. That which is tainted with feebleness thou hast rejected but never has love destroyed anything that is holy. Ah forget me not for ever, do not separate thyself from me. . . . No one is left to hold me by the hand. As life goes on I turn my eyes as I was wont towards Vincent my brother and he is no more. In my misery I groan like a man destitute of help. Whom shall I consult in doubt? To whom shall I give my confidence in adversity? Who will help me to carry my burden? . . . With speech amiable and full of modesty didst thou not often correct the sharpness of my sermons and in thy friendship didst thou not temper their fire? . . . I thank thee from the bottom of my heart, O gentle friend, for the fruit of my sermons and labours during the course of my journeyings in Italy. If in anything I have been useful, if my teachings have been salutary it is to thee that I owe it.

Whilst thou didst watch over the cares of the household I rested, thanks to thee, or delivered my sermons. How had I not been secure when I knew thou wert in my place, thou at once my right hand, the apple of my eye, my heart and my tongue? . . . How many faults had I committed in my sermons if his just intelligence, his enlightened mind and great discernment had not trained me with so much zeal and carefulness? . . . If I have any good quality it is from thee that I have it. . . .

"I weep for a saving counsellor, a faithful helper in the things of God . . . The better part of me cut off, I crawl in the mire and I am asked if I weep. My heart is torn out and I am asked if I feel some grief. I weep and I feel grief because my strength is not as the rock, and my flesh is not of brass. I suffer and I groan and 'my grief is always before me.' "[1]

By the death of Brother Vincent, loneliness was added to the suffering from his fatigues and infirmities that made St. Bernardino an old man at the age of sixty-two. He had no sense of needing and deserving "a peaceful old age," but went on with his labours to the last. At the end of this year he was preaching in Milan, and in 1443 he journeyed to Padua to preach the Lent there and to attend the Chapter General presided over by Albert of Sarteano. This Chapter proved anything but a peaceful one. Since the Pope had appointed Albert Vicar General he had found the task of governing the whole Order exceedingly difficult, and the Pope's hopes of the Conventuals agreeing

[1] Quoted by M. Thureau Dangin.

to his government proved illusory. At this Chapter over 2,000 friars were present and the Conventuals, raising a cry of "Freedom, Freedom," tore out of Albert's hands the Pope's Bull in virtue of which he presided. St. Bernardino was obliged to try to calm the tumult, and he assured them that Albert had no wish to be made Minister General, that he himself thought the election of a Conventual advisable. Albert of Rusconi was accordingly chosen instead of Sarteano with the concurrence of Bernardino, and the choice reluctantly confirmed by the Pope. Fr. Amadio Maria says indeed that Bernardino preferred this result as he feared that if Observants and Conventuals were at this date fused, instead of the latter becoming stricter the former would get more lax. But he seems to have been alone among the Observants in this opinion and to have annoyed them by his action in opposing the election of one of their own body. According to Fr. Francis of Rimini, a learned Conventual and friend of Bernardino, his death was hastened by the way they pestered him on the subject (See Ferrers Howell, p. 79).

A wise reformer's post is generally a lonely one, the lax do not love his strictness, his strictest followers think him weak to the lax; and so it was with S. Bernardino. This additional loneliness must have been hard to bear following on the loss of Vincent. After all he had done for the Observance and the way in which it was bound up with his life, could he see into the future with confidence in the immense ultimate success of the movement? A very little thing when his life first touched it, it had become great and was to be far greater.

This same year when the convent of the Aracœli at Rome was given to them, we learn that the friars numbered 4,000 and at the words of St. John Capistran, who, next to Bernardino, did most for the Observance, convents seemed to spring up on every side, while those of the mitigation grew fewer and fewer. Often Capistran was only reaping what Bernardino had sown, but after Bernardino's death he preached with marvellous effect in France, Spain, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Poland, and perhaps England, converting immense crowds, and always warring against laxity in the Order.

In Italy too, James della Marca and other of Bernardino's children wrought much by their preaching, and the Observance by the end of the 15th century had practically exchanged with the Conventuals in the matter of numbers, and the anomaly might be seen of the many governed by a Superior chosen from the few. Yet more extraordinary, and unique, as M. Thureau Dangin points out, in the history of any Order, is the fact that the friars, beginning by finding a literal interpretation of the Rule too hard, grew stricter with time. For when in 1517 Leo X divided them into Friars Minor Conventuals and Friars Minor of the Regular Observance, it was to the Superior of the latter alone that the title was given, "Minister General of the whole Order of Friars Minor, Successor of St. Francis."

CHAPTER IX.

THE LAST JOURNEY.

BEFORE the meeting of the Chapter General St. Bernardino preached to the people of Padua, and it is said that he spoke of the need to lay aside all other work and devote himself only to preaching, because the time was soon coming when he could preach no longer. And in concluding his sermons the friar made his testament, leaving to the people the Name of Jesus that they might ever love and honour it, and a constant charity that they might be united to him and he to them in bonds of love in Jesus Christ, that they might one day join one another's society in heaven. After the Chapter he passed on from Vicenza to Verona where he held immense crowds and among them the magistrates and learned men of the city. Then he turned again to Ferrara and there in the future birthplace of Savonarola, tradition tells that he preached a sermon that foreshadows those of the great Dominican, and speaks in prophetic words of the horrors that were to fall on Italy in the coming century. Fr. Amadio Maria gives its substance in these words: "Woe to thee, Italy, in these years, for armed nations will come upon thee with valour, and their tongue will be unknown to thee! Then will thy tears flood the earth in the deluge of blood which will be shed; thou shalt call out, and the Lord will not hear thee. Woe to thee, Italy, in that day! If thou fleest to walled cities, I will

gird thee about with enemies, and strike thee with famine. If thou run to the strong castle, or the mountain height, I will cast poison and death into the air; and these things shall not cease, O Italy, until thou soften thy heart. Woe to the city which shall be humbled, and shall lose unnumbered sons! Woe to the city that shall be scourged with pestilence and brought down to the ground! Woe to the city of Tuscany, it shall witness untold bloodshed! Rome shall become as a widow, and horrors shall reign throughout Italy. Woe, woe, woe, O Italy, in that day! But in that day pray to God, as the men of Nineveh with fasting and weeping. and smiting of the breast; rend your hearts, and you will find mercy with God Who reigneth for ever and ever."

And in the following year (1444) Bernardino paid his last visit to Massa, his birthplace, and to Siena, "his most sweet home which in all his life he loved so much." At Massa he preached the Lent and worked a most notable miracle. A leper, a Spaniard, begged of him one day something to cover his sore feet. Bernardino at once gave him his own stockings, which he wore on account of his infirmities. The man went off thanking him, but had only gone a little way when he felt as though the stockings were full of small pebbles that hurt his feet. Taking them off he found they were full of scales, and that he was whole up to his knees. He put them on again and walked on, rejoicing. A little further and the same feeling: Looking again he found scales in the stockings: he was whole up to his hips. And the third time the same

thing happened and the man found himself whole in every part of his body.[1]

After Bernardino's last sermon in Siena he left the town secretly by night. By way of Asciano and having visited Lake Trasimeno he came to Perugia, and there a pulpit was raised in the square and a vast crowd assembled. But having mounted the pulpit the friar only blessed the people and smiled very sweetly upon them—he would not preach, either, as has been said, from fear of injury to some among so vast a multitude, or because he feared his voice was no longer equal to so great a strain. From some of his pictures we may imagine Bernardino an old man, as much from his labours and austerities and the illness that was upon him as from years, with his worn body, and face wrinkled and hollowed in, but with wonderful sweetness of expression: thus we see him standing above the vast concourse of people contenting them with his smile and his blessing. To Foligno he came next and then to Spoleto, working miracles in each of these towns and leaving them with the greatest difficulty, pressed on by vast crowds. Then to Rieti where he was met by people and magistrates bearing torches to conduct him to a banquet, and then at Cittaducale he preached his last sermon. Never had his words touched more deeply, and at the end of the sermon he begged the people to pray that the pardon of his sins and the death of the just might be accorded him.

For a long time now Bernardino had journeyed with pain and difficulty. He was attacked with

[1] Amadio.

dysentery and grew weaker hour by hour. Mounted on a donkey he rode on towards Aquila. He grew faint and asked for water. There was none, his companion said, nor any hope of finding it in this arid country. "Go on," said Bernardino, "and when you meet a countryman, ask him where a spring may be found." A little further on a peasant showed them the way to a spring. And, as Bernardino sat on its brink refreshing himself, St. Peter Celestine appeared to him and, embracing him, told him that he would die at Aquila and would become with himself the patron of that town. He rode on as far as the village of San Sylvestro and was carried thence on a litter to the Conventual convent at Aquila where he might be well cared for.

But the end was soon now and may be told in the words of Bernabæus Senensis. "The doctors strove to heal this sickness. But the illness prevailing, at Vespers on the vigil of the Ascension of Our Lord Jesus Christ, he gave his disciples a sign from his couch that he wished to die on the earth. And so when he was laid on the earth he rested in the Lord our God. But near to his death, before he sent forth his spirit, he commended his native town most devoutly to God."

De hac luce migravit ut credimus ad Christum.

And at the moment that his spirit passed, his brethren in the chapel were singing the words: *Manifestavi nomen tuum hominibus.*

As soon as Bernardino was dead, his companions prepared to carry away his body secretly to Capriola. But the magistrates, hearing of this and

determining that the relics should not be lost to the town, interfered. By their orders the body was left in Aquila and exposed to veneration in the Church of St. Francis. On Ascension Day it was carried in procession through the town to St. Maximus and back to St. Francis. Very many miracles were worked, of which a large number were examined into with care, with a view to the process of canonization. The town of Siena sent an envoy within a short time, who collected narratives of thirty of these miracles attested by the magistrates, and subscribed by the chancellor of the city on July 19, 1444.

During the time the relics were exposed, all work was stopped in Aquila, the church bells rang continually, lamps, torches and candles burnt day and night in the church of St. Francis. The whole town kept holiday and festival, but the peace and rejoicing were rudely interrupted by one of the popular revolts to which St. Bernardino had been too much accustomed during his life. Matters had gone so far that several victims were on the point of being executed by the mob when a child came running up. "Stop! do not shed innocent blood," he exclaimed, "go at once to the Church of the Friars Minor, where you will find what you desire in abundance." And, indeed, on coming to the church the insurgents found the saint's body covered with blood which was gushing from his nostrils, "in such profusion," says Father Amadio Maria, "that it appeared like the playing of two fountains. . . This marvellous flood never abated until the people prostrate on the ground humbly

and fervently begged pardon and mercy of God for their extravagant crime."[1]

Never more eloquently had Bernardino preached peace and concord than now when, being dead, he yet spoke.

Father Julian, a companion of Bernardino, in a letter to Milan describes other scenes in the church where Bernardino's body lay:

"Nor were they content to kiss his hands and feet, for some fortunate ones were able to put rings on his fingers and toes. O what a quantity of hoods, handkerchiefs, cloths, cords, iron bars, belts and other things did they lay upon him so as to possess something that had touched the body! In the morning it yielded a sweet perfume, and every time (*sic*) the perfume increased. When the body was put into the coffin and nailed down some lay down beneath the coffin, some above it, and others carried off bits of the wood. A part of the cloth was cut away by stealth; and they treated the coffin just as they had treated the body when it had been uncovered, except that they could not put rings on the fingers and toes. This devotion has been going on these three days, until an hour after midnight (*a una hora di notte*): I don't know how much longer it will last! O how glad of it I was, and am."[2]

St. John Capistran urged forward the cause of the canonization of Bernardino, but the care always shown by Rome in examining and sifting the

[1] Amadio, p. 289; Wadding, xi. 193, 194. The negative evidence of Fr. Julian's silence as to this story in his letter to Milan does not seem enough to overthrow it.

[2] Quoted by Mr. Ferrers Howell.

evidence made it go slowly, and Eugenius died before it was completed. At the beginning of the pontificate of Nicholas V fresh attacks which had been made on Bernardino's name had to be answered, and were met by Nicholas himself in a Bull against the saint's accusers. Still the process seemed to the eager wishes of St. John to go slowly.

He went therefore to Rome and entreated the Pope to allow him to submit to the trial by fire to prove the sanctity of his friend. He suggested that he himself and the body of Bernardino should be thrown together into the flames, should they escape unhurt it would be proof positive that Bernardino was indeed a saint. One condition however he made, that should he perish in the fire it should be accounted entirely the result of his own sins and be no hindrance to the cause of his companion's canonization. Pope Nicholas seems to have been far more touched than surprised by this most startling scheme. He refused we are told to allow the trial by fire but was moved to tears by the generous offer and hastened the process as much as might be.

Mediæval too and of a quaint charm is the history of the next difficulty that arose and the way in which St. John met it.

The relics of St. Bernardino had just at this time unaccountably ceased to work miracles and the people of Aquila were very much disturbed. Capistran therefore went at night to the tomb of his friend where, "after saying a short prayer he laid before Bernardino in the language which one friend uses in speaking to another, the weight

of anxiety and labour which he had taken up for his sake and the confusion and scandal which had fallen upon everybody, bidding him, as he had during life been ever ready to obey the Superior who was now addressing him, give proof of his obedience also after death; and he now charged him by that virtue, and on the part of the Holy Spirit, to perform some miracles, if he possessed sufficient merit with God."

And at once the miracles began again in greater numbers than before.

A little later a certain very holy Lay-Brother of the Friars Minor who had not long been dead was working wonders daily at Rieti: a town about fifteen miles from Aquila. People unfriendly to Bernardino assured the Pope that Brother Thomas must certainly be canonized as soon as he. St. John was in despair, fearing fresh delays, so he hastened to the tomb of Brother Thomas and commanded him by virtue of holy obedience to work no more miracles until Bernardino's canonization should be completed. Br. Thomas obeyed and until after the canonization the miracles stopped, to begin again immediately after Bernardino's process was concluded and St. John commanded the lay-Brother to work as before.

"Thus," concludes Fr. Amadio Maria, "did Heaven show forth the holiness of Bernardino who began to work at command marvellous actions, and also the power of the virtue of obedience, which ensures respect even from the blessed spirits reigning in glory."

Deliberation was especially necessary on the part

of Rome in canonizing a man so lately dead. Strong feelings were still likely to give a bias on one side or the other, and in the case of Bernardino the intense enthusiasm of his friends and indeed of practically the whole of Italy on his behalf made the danger of haste very great. Against this might be set the advantage of many eye-witnesses to his miracles, to the great effect of his sermons and the manifest holiness of his life.

After most careful examination and enquiry the process of canonization was completed on Whit Sunday, May 24th, 1450, six years after Bernardino's death, the day on which he died, May 20th, being chosen for his feast. This canonization was celebrated in Rome with great rejoicing, which was added to by the fact that St. John Capistran had appointed a Chapter General of the Order to be held there at that time. Among the friars present were three who themselves were later raised to the altar: St. John Capistran, St. James della Marca, and St. Diego of Alcala.

When the news spread through Italy it was received everywhere with the same joy, especially at Aquila and Siena. At Siena altars were erected at every street corner, ivy, myrtle and laurel branches were strewn in all the streets, the church doors were hung with silken curtains, trees were transplanted to shade the streets, and shows and " sportive representations " might be seen on every side. A holiday was proclaimed and on the 14th of June the Bishop came to open the rejoicings and sang vespers with the clergy in honour of St. Bernardino in a chapel raised in the square where

he had been wont to preach. The next day the Bishop celebrated Mass in the same place.

Displays of fireworks took place and bonfires were kindled in all the neighbouring country. "And to render it still more complete in every way," says Father Amadio Maria, "meat and drink were freely distributed during these days to everyone who wanted them. On the third day, being June 16th, a solemn procession took its way through the city amidst an incredible throng of clergy and people in admirable order, and with a splendour and general fervour which baffle description . . . For many centuries no such joyous spectacle had been seen in Siena."

CHAPTER X.

SERMONS TO THE PEOPLE.

(i) Of Governments and how one should Govern with Justice.

We were speaking yesterday of the lively and mutual love all should have for one another, and the cursed *Capelluccio*[1] did not want this preached in full as we had begun to do but he shall have it with interest, for all this week with the help of blessed Jesus we will preach about this subject. And now we will go on with the matter we had begun, which I find as useful and necessary as anything I could speak to you about. For here lies the

[1] The sermon had been interrupted by rain, for which the preacher blames the devil (*Capelluccio*).

greatest fault into which you have all fallen, and this sickness that you have in you needs to be doctored in its proper place. If a man who had a pain in his shoulder were doctored on his heel he would not get well—or you if you had a pain in your head, and your shoulder were doctored. I say that if thy head is bad doctor thy head, if thine arm is bad doctor thine arm. One ought then to be doctored where the illness is. *Doh!* To-day the new Signori have come in who are to rule your city,[1] and this is a thing that often happens. It is good to speak of the things it becomes them to do, to the end also that everybody should learn these things in order that he should himself know how to govern the republic well. And it behoves me to shorten my speech because I came late, and this was my fault into which I fell through ignorance. I thought I had to preach at half-past three.

Wouldst thou rule well? Then carry thy head low and humbly, be like an empty reed and listen to every person with ready charity. Consider thine own self and marvel that thou shouldst be fit to govern others. Dost know how to rule thyself? How dost thou know the way to govern thyself? How art thou to keep thyself from sin? How knowest thou how to do those things which concern the health of thy soul?—"Badly"—But if thou knowest not how to rule and to govern thyself think how ill thou wilt know how to rule others. What shouldst thou do? Keep humble, and thou wilt be enlightened by God. Stand with thy head lowered,

[1] This sermon was preached on September 1st, on which day the new Signori entered into office for two months.

an empty reed. Dost thou see that thou art of thine own self empty?—"Yes"—and of what?—"Not to will, not to be able, not to know how to rule of myself without the grace of God." If, however, thou dost rule well hold this to be from God and not from thyself, for of thyself thou wouldst do nothing but evil, and when thou knowest thyself to be empty God will fill thee with air, that is to say with His grace, and the more thou knowest thyself empty so much the more will God fill thee up with air and with grace.

Another condition necessary to him who rules is justice. What are kingdoms without justice? Dost thou know what they are? They are one enormous larceny! And because this matter is most manifest—that cities and provinces fall away if they do not keep themselves in justice—therefore is it so much commended. *Diligite justitiam qui judicatis terram.* Love justice you who govern the earth. Do you desire to love justice? Then do not fail in it; be sure always to punish with mercy.

O thou who wouldst exercise prudence, but wilt use so often so many deceits, do it not, for thou wilt never deceive God though men, perchance, thou mayest deceive. O thou who desirest to exercise the virtue of humility but sometimes with humility minglest pride, thou wilt certainly never deceive God but wilt rather deceive thyself. What I say of this virtue may be understood for all the others. Go straight forward and deceive not. Order everything to its appointed end and thus thou shalt obtain the wand. Dost thou not know

the little wand that is placed in the hand of the Potestà and also of many other Signori? It shows thee how he should do justice to all and that justice should always stand erect for it does not bend either backwards or forwards or to right or to left.

Doh! aproposito a most beautiful example has occurred to me. O woman *doh!* listen to this story. The lion once heard that the *frati* had held a Chapter where they accused themselves, as sinners, of the faults they had committed confessing themselves guilty. Said the lion: "O, if the *frati* hold a Chapter of them all before their greatest, I who am the greatest of all the animals of the earth and lord of them all, should I be worse than they?" And at once he gave order for a Chapter to all the animals, that they should come before him. And they thus assembling, he got into a chair and when he was in it he gave command that all should seat themselves around it. And thus sitting the lion said: "I do not want us to be worse than others in this matter. I want us to hold a Chapter as the *frati* do in which every sin and evil which is done is to be told for I, being the greatest, wish to know them. All come to me one by one and accuse yourselves sinners for what you have done." The ass was told to go first so he went up to the lion, knelt down and said: "Messere, have mercy." The lion said: "What hast thou done? Tell it." The ass said: "Messere, I belong to a countryman and sometimes he loads me and puts on me a burden of straw and takes me to the city to sell it, and it sometimes happened that I took a mouthful of it as I went without my master noticing it and this I have done

several times." Then the lion said: " O thief, thief, villainous traitor! Dost thou not consider the ill thou hast done? And when canst thou restore the worth of that which thou hast robbed and eaten?" And at once he ordered that this ass should be taken and that he should be given a great load of blows and thus it was done. After him came the goat before the lion and in like manner went on his knees asking for mercy. The lion said: " What hast thou done? Tell thy sin." The goat said: " My lord I confess that I have several times gone into various women's kitchen gardens to do harm, particularly into the kitchen garden of a widow who had a little kitchen garden where were many sweet smelling herbs, marjorum, serpillum and also sweet basil, and many times I have done harm to her cabbages and also to very young little trees, and I have taken off the tops which were the most tender. As I did this evil to her so also have I done to many kitchen gardens, and sometimes I have done it in such a manner that I left no green to be seen." The lion said: " *Doh,* I have already met with two very different consciences. One has too delicate a one, that is too much, and the other has it too gross like that thief of an ass. Dost thou make a great case of conscience to eat a few herbs? No need to tell this sin, it is the custom of goats to act thus. Thou hast therefore a great excuse when thou art inclined to do this. Go, go, I absolve thee, think of it no more." Behind the goat came the fox and went on his knees before the lion. The lion said: " Tell thy sins; What hast thou done?" The fox said: " Messere, I confess that I have

murdered many hens and eaten them and sometimes I have gone into the poultry yard where they lodge, and because I saw that I could not reach them I pretended my tail was a stick which I was going to throw, and because they believed it was a stick they were suddenly frightened and flew to the ground, and then I ran among them and murdered as many as I could get hold of, and although sometimes I only carried off one or so I left the rest dead." The lion said: "O how much conscience thou hast! Go, in a good hour go. All that thou dost is natural to thee. I give thee no penance and charge thee of no sin: moreover I tell thee to act valiantly, just as thou hast been doing and do not grieve unless over the hens that were left." And when that one had gone the wolf came and said: "My lord I have been sometimes around the sheepfold examining it. Thou knowest that the net is high on all sides around it and I fixed my mind on the place where I could most easily get in, and when I had found the place I went for a piece of wood which I thought would be as heavy as a sheep and tried how I could get in and out with it, and I did this so as not to be surprised by dogs. And having done this I entered suddenly as softly as I could with the weight of the stick, and swiftly I slew more sheep than I needed and then came away carrying one on my back." The lion said, "Here is another delicate conscience. Dost thou know how I answer thee? Never trouble thy conscience with such things; go and act valiantly from this hour forth without a thought of me." And when the wolf had gone,

came the sheep also with its head lowered saying, "Ba-ba." The lion said: "What hast thou done my Lady Hypocrite?" She replied: "Messere, I have sometimes passed along the roads beside which corn is sown and I have sometimes climbed up secretly and seeing these green and tender little plants I have taken little mouthfuls of them. I have not quite rooted them up but I have nibbled the tops of this tender stuff." Then the lion said: "O cursed thief, thief and traitor. Thus hast thou done such harm! Thou goest about saying always 'Ba-ba' and thou stealest on the roads. O cursed thief, how much evil hast thou done. But give her many a beating, give her so many that you break all her bones (*rompiate tutta quanta*) and keep her three days eating nothing at all."

O how much sense there is in this tale! Have you understood me? One raven never pecks out another's eyes. And thus when it is a wicked fox or wolf that does something, dissemble, pretend you don't see, you know, like a cat. But if it is the wretched little sheep or the goat (*sic*), that is the widow or orphan or a little poor person who does or says some small thing, murder, murder as much as you like. And so he's robbed in such a way that nothing's left him. Wolf doesn't eat wolf but they eat other flesh. And so, therefore, I say, O you who rule: Do not beat the ass and the sheep for a small matter and praise the fox and the wolf for a great sin.

Doh, I want you to carry away an example that I don't know if you have ever heard, of what Pietro Pettinaio said. He had gone to Pisa to buy iron for combs which was his craft, and at the time when

he was gone a government had been turned out at Siena and certain exiles were going towards Pisa. They found the holy Peter on the way going back to Siena. They said to him, believing that he had the spirit of prophecy: "O Peter, when shall we return to our home for we have been driven out by those who were more powerful than we?" Holy Peter answered (*Doh*, hear this good saying, O scribe and write this down), he spoke thus: "When they are full of sins fit for punishment and when you are purged of your sins, both you will return and they will be driven out and thus again it will happen to you another time, for when your sins are multiplied and theirs are purged they will return and will drive you forth." Have you understood? It is to the end that if justice be not done every city would be full of iniquity. I say to you: Hold fast justice and chastise the evil man. You see a clear example: if grass does not germinate you will not reap it. Thus if you take the wicked quickly from a city you will seldom find injustice there, if the thief be taken away there will seldom be stealing, if the traitor there will seldom be treachery: and this I say of every vice.

If a man is wicked imprison him, lock him up that he may do no harm to others. And still more, cork his mouth that he may not stink and infect your room since God has permitted you to act thus, and if you do not he will ruin all the rest. It is possible that a wicked man should ruin not only his own house but the whole of his city and also all Italy. Wherefore chastise, chastise O ruler, act so that for thy part thou dost not rest till the evil be extinguished.

(ii) Of the twelve Handmaids that the Virgin Mary had.

David, speaking of the glorious Virgin Mary, saw her bringing behind her very many maidens, virgins, in her company, as he tells in the 44th Psalm, and he says that she brought them with her because she was the head of all the virgins. Many other virgins shall be brought after her. To-day we must see who those are who should be presented with the Virgin Mary. I say that they must be virgins. Then we must see how virgins should live and we shall see how Mary was living when the angel announced to her, and learn to-day O maidens how you should live before you go to your husbands. And first let us contemplate how Mary, virgin and pure without stain of sin, was accompanied by twelve maidens who had ever dwelt with her, and Mary did nothing without the knowledge of these maidens. But I will tell you the names of all and what they had to do, for they never stood idle but always exercised themselves with Mary.

The first damsel that Mary had was My Lady Clausura (enclosure). This lady had so great a love for Mary that she wished never to be parted from her, although she had the care of the door. Mary had arranged it with her and had said to her: Dost thou know what to do when anyone at all knocks at the door? Never go and open without first telling me, and first thou must ask who it is. If he is a man thou knowest what to do; thou wilt go there to the window (for she had a window like

the one here of the Signori or that of the Potestà so that she could see others and was not seen herself). And even if thou goest down do not open the door but open the small wicket. If it is a man never open, if it is a woman ask what she wants to the end that we may never be deceived. And this rule she ever kept for whosoever came thither. And for example when the Angel Gabriel arrived he knocked, and My Lady Clausura ran at once to the window and seeing this person, asked, Who is it? and at once withdrawing herself within she ran to Mary and said: "Someone has been knocking at the door and it seems to me to be an angel." Then Mary said: "Go and open to him." And when he was opened to at once he bent his head that his face might not be seen. And thereupon says the evangelist—*Et ingressus angelus ad eam dixit, Ave gratia plena, Dominus tecum*—and after he was come in he said: "Hail full of grace, the Lord is with thee." Oh maidens learn how you should stay at home, and what care you should take of who comes in to you in your home for thou seest that the Virgin Mary stayed shut up at home and wished always to see who wanted to enter her house and what they wanted. Maidens, you do not know youth, how difficult a thing it is. There is nothing better than to stay enclosed and to have no intimacy with men or with women either.

Why are girls mostly variable? Being inexperienced in the things of the world when they see something new at once they wish for it in such a fashion that all their feelings expand in longing for it.

Believe in me for I know I speak the truth.

Wilt thou act in the fashion I advise, oh girl? Oh, be sure to beware of My Lady Intimacy. Never speak to anyone nor let anyone enter thy chamber, and do not thou enter into the chambers of others. Oh, how much evil thou dost, thou her mother, to let her gossip and be intimate in other people's houses. Thou hadst done better to bring her to the sermon. *Doh!* I will give you an example from nature. I see yonder a wild pig which has been brought to the city, and through the habit of seeing people so much does not fly as he used to do in the forest, and through being so much accustomed to people, if anyone goes up to give him something he will let himself be touched and scratched, and thou canst do with him what thou wilt. And this comes to pass solely by the intimacy of so many people whom he sees all day. But go to the forest, and entice one of those who remain there, as soon as he sees thee at once he will fly away. Show him acorns and go towards him; worse! Entice him, *Ciro*! *ciro*! whistle for him but he will never wait. And thus: a girl who is not on her guard as she should be, who when she hears a horse at once runs to the window and wants to see and know everything, thou knowest how easily she may be lightly spoken of. This Lady Clausura had a sister whose name was My Lady Selvatica (wild, untamed) and all day she said to her: "Do not let thyself be seen by men. Do not go to the window to see them play *La Palla*, or to hear them play and sing in the morning. Never go to the window by day or by night. Do not stand there to listen to the youths who climb on

the roof and throw down little stones, and want to talk to thee: never do thus." And always these two sisters Selvatica and Domestica had something to say. Hast thou understood me? Thou wilt understand me still better further on.

The second handmaid of Mary was My Lady Audienza, who like Clausura had seen this Angel, who thus spoke, and she went at once to see what he wanted. And the Angel told her and forthwith Mary knew it. That this was so thou seest, for the evangelist said: *Quae cum audisset,* and this when she heard. Dost thou know what this shows thee? It shows that thou shouldst always listen to good, holy and useful matters. To such things thou shouldst ever keep thy ears open, but not when thou hearest the singing and music of youths who desire to bring thee to evil. When thou hearest them dost know what to do? Fly, do not listen, for if thou stayest, thou stayest at great peril. For a girl's heart vacillates, she does not stand firm, and then comes, etc. (*sic*). There are three persons thou shouldst listen to, O maiden who hast no husband. First God and then thy father and then thy mother. Let us begin with God. When thou sayest the "Hail Mary," with whom dost thou believe thou speakest? Thou art speaking with the Virgin Mary. And thus when thou sayest the "Our Father," thou art speaking with Messere Domenedio. Know that when thou greetest the Virgin Mary at once she greets thee. She is not one of these ill-mannered rustics we find often enough; indeed, she is wholly affable. She greets thee every evening when thou hearest the bell up there in the

Bishop's house ring out the *Ave Maria*. O wilt thou be so uncivil as not to greet her? When thou greetest her she will at once answer thee. And when thou speakest to God above He too will answer thee, and will speak with thee. Secondly, thou shouldst listen to thy father and obey him, for he will never tell thee anything but for thy honour and profit, as regards God and as regards the world. Thirdly, thou shouldst listen to thy mother, and when she teaches thee, saying: "Do not go to the window and stand watching those who are so immodest playing at *La Palla*, do not try to hear the singing of vain songs, do not listen to the parleying of any man, set thy mind on no other thing than modesty, O modesty is such a noble thing, my daughter, believe me and do what I tell thee"—do what she tells thee.

Listen, daughter, and see and understand, and incline thy ears to what I tell thee. Hear what thou shouldst hear and see what thou shouldst see. Take heed of that which is thy salvation; keep thyself from those evil women who, when they come into a house, always try to discourse while the mother is not there, and the girl who is not experienced in this world, who is pure and without deceit, does not know them. Wilt thou that I teach thee to know them? Look well when anyone comes into the house, and take heed of what I tell thee. Commonly they are wont to go when the mother is not there; this is their custom, and they are wont to bear on their arm a little basket in which they always carry small vials for painting, and this is how they are wont to act. When she arrives she

will sit down with thee, and will ask how thy mother is and where she is. Then she will begin to look at thy face and to take heed to thy whole person. And they are wont to say, " Oh how dost thou do? Thou dost not deck or adorn thyself, thou seemest really like a beast, and it seems to me thou takest no care of how thou art. Go in a good hour, go! Dress thyself up to show what thou art, thou art the most beautiful girl in the world, and thou art as little decked as a sheep." The puzzled girl answers as well as she knows how. The woman rises, and says to her, " I will adorn thee with my own hands," and she helps her, and teaches her how to paint herself, and praises her: " Oh, thou art beautiful! Thou seemest to me the most beautiful girl I have ever seen." And she makes her jump for joy, for generally girls wish to be praised for their beauty. And when she has thus talked a little, and they have grown intimate by gossiping, she begins to tell her business, and first she wants to be paid, either with small coin, or with salted meat, or sausages, or flour or wine or oil or bread. They are wont never to go away empty-handed. They always do their best to steal something. And then she begins to say to the girl: " I have brought thee a piece of good news. There is one who wishes thee the greatest good in the world—true love." And it is always true love.

Dost thou know what thou shouldst do to such as these? As someone else did, who when one of them began to talk to her of these things gave her a load of blows. Another girl when one of them had talked to her called a troupe of children and

said to them: "Go to such a one's house with this truss of straw and put it in the entry." And she gave them a truss of straw, and so it was done, and she burnt her house for her. Oh girl listen to my counsel, never listen to such people. You believe that I do not know about these things? Yes, I know what Bertha has spun. I have even been in a place where there were men who were saying: "If I could talk to her! O! if I could touch her hand I could make her open to me." And I know that they say truly. And the first thing they say is: "I want to speak to thee from the true love I bring thee." O what true love this is to cast contempt on thee and on thy father and mother and all thy relations, to make them cover their eyes unable to appear among people ever again. Scorn for thee and for thy father and thy mother and all thy house, and lastly for the husband who shall be given thee! Therefore, be wise, listen, but not to every person.

The third handmaiden of Mary was called My Lady Vergognosa. And she was ever close by Mary.

The fourth handmaid of Mary was called My Lady Prudenzia. O how wise she was! When she had heard the angel's words this lady at once began to think. *Cogitabat qualis esset ista salutatio.* She thought: "What does this salutation mean." As thou knowest he said: "*Ave gratia plena, Dominus tecum: benedicta tu in mulieribus.*" When this damsel had heard these words she said to Mary: "We must not answer yet but we must think, for this is an affair of the greatest importance. If

thou promise thou wilt have to keep thy word." And so she considered. If she had answered at once she would not have done well to consent. Nor would she have done well to chase the angel away when she knew him; yes, she chose the best way in thinking it over. Do not you do like many who will not take their daughters to the sermon, saying that they do not want them to learn many things that are said there to the end that they may know how to keep from sin, saying: "They do not know which thing is a sin." Alas, thou knowest not what thou sayest; wouldst thou rather that she should suddenly fall into sin and commit it than know how to keep herself from it? Act not thus I say, make her know from what she should keep herself and thou canst not err. If thou wilt not thou also wilt come to evil. Dost thou think that they are not still sins by their not being known? It is not thus. I tell thee that if thou use the sermon thou wilt become wise and prudent, and wilt know how to keep thyself from sin. And thus I tell thee thou wilt make thyself like a dove not knowing how to do evil because thou keepest thyself from it. How many doctrines are taught by listening to sermons. Thou wilt learn to speak gently and to speak low, to speak little and well. When thou goest to thy husband show him that thou art not a chatterbox, for it often happens to many women that their husbands hate them for talking too much. Keep this in mind that if a woman talks little and lives chastely her husband will always wish her well. O it is so useful a thing to live quietly as regards customs, actions and virtues that it is a

sort of holiness. An example of this may be seen in officials who cannot be spoken to at random. When thou goest in thou goest from one to the other before arriving at speech with him thou seekest. Thus we see with the Holy Father: if anyone wants to speak to the Holy Father he remains shut away so that before coming to him one must speak with several. Reaching the first entrance thou askest an audience and thou stayest there a while before going on to the second, and thus thy desire grows; and then when thou passest to the second thy desire to go further on grows still more: then thou reachest the third, and thus, the desire thou hast ever growing, thou goest in to the Holy Father, and thou hast much greater reverence than thou wouldst have had if thou hadst gone without any design and hadst found all the entries open. By this means people value him (the more highly). And so I say of the signori. Tell me: if the signori stood yonder above the fountain where those stand who receive work, or as the porters stand, how little they would be valued!

The fifth is called My Lady Timorosa, and this angel seeing her, at once said to her: "*Ne timeas Maria*—Fear not Mary." O what a thing it is to think that she feared, who had always lived in the service of God. It is an example that we should always have the fear of God inwardly and outwardly.

The sixth damsel who was with Mary was called My Lady Oneste, Whoever has seen this lady and observed her carefully in her walk, in her speech, in her demeanour in every matter, has seen she was

so modest that it was wonderful. Dost thou think perchance that she adorned herself as you all do? No. As God had made her so she remained. Dost thou remember how Esther acted? How she never strove to appear to King Assuerus more beautiful than she was? She did not do as you do, you women, you could not be called with truth My Ladies Oneste, but My Ladies Disoneste. And believe me that if you get as much worse in four or six years as you have done in two while I was not here you will not do as badly again by the end of ten. Do you know why? Because you could not. I fear, fear, fear lest what has come upon many may come also upon you. As I spoke to you the other day of your large sleeves so to-day I speak of your soldiers' cloaks, so that you seem to me not good women but female warriors. And do you know what will happen to you? Out of one of your cloaks two could be made and would do very well: the upper half would do nicely for the page and would not have to be touched, and the lower half would be excellent for the master and would only need a little adjustment. I shall not always stay with you for I will go and will be far away and I shall say: "I spoke well to my men and women of Siena but I was not believed. But see what is come upon their heads!" And thou wilt stand here and wilt say: "Brother Bernardino told me this, and I would not believe him, and yet it is come upon us as he said and even worse."

The seventh damsel and companion of the Virgin Mary was My Lady Diligenzia. This lady kept all the house in order and all that she did she did

with so much love and so much order that while she ate she ate in order, and so even to sleeping; everything she did she did at the appointed time. Learn O girl to do what thou hast to do with order and with love. If thou hast to spin or to sew or to sweep or to scour the furniture of the house, or whatever thou hast to do, do it with diligence. Wilt thou that I teach thee to know who is apt to do well and has some little judgment? Listen: thou shalt know (the others) by three signs: first by laughing, by showing their teeth. When thou seest one who is in the habit of laughing to excess so that she opens her mouth and shows all her teeth say with certainty that such a one is a fool. They may also be known by their walk that they go with their heads high in a giddy fashion. The dress they wear too betrays them. When thou seest follies on their outward dress think then that their hearts are full of silly rubbish (*chicchirichi*). Hast thou never seen any of these women who have large heads? They are like the screech-owl, for they carry heads like screech-owls. What is a screech owl good for? It is useful to catch at this present time small birds who are to be seized just now. Thus do those who have huge heads like screech owls: they catch young men. Thou knowest that when thou placest a screech-owl above a thicket all the little birds come down and look at her and she looks at them, and all that come remain ensnared and taken. Thus do these youths, they go around these girls who have big heads. They go round and round and at last they remain ensnared in the snare.

The eighth damsel who was with Mary was My Lady Virginità. This lady was ever with Mary. If Mary walked Virginità walked with her, if she read Virginità read with her. In whatever Mary did Virginità was with her, and because she was not wont to be with any other person she said this saying to the angel: "*Quoniam virum non cognosco.*—In what way can that be which thou sayest because I know not man and have resolved never to know any man. Even were I to give birth to the Son of God through knowledge of man I am resolved never to consent so as not to lose my virginity. I have given it once to God and I will always keep it for Him, wherefore I will not be a mother or give birth in this way." How well these two stayed reasoning together, Mary and the angel! O virgins learn that while you keep virginity you are always accompanied by angels. She that is married and joined in matrimony is not thus. Dost thou not know that a virgin's merit is said to be 100, a married woman's 30 and a widow's 60. See how much the virgin is in advance of the other degrees. O virgins learn so to keep yourselves; fly the sight of man.

The ninth of the companions of the Virgin Mary was My Lady Ubbidienza. She had heard the angel's words and she thought that they could be conformed with what Mary wished herself, that is that her virginity should always be kept, so she said to Mary: "Consider how to be content because God has sent this angel to thee: answer him quickly and tell him that thus thou art content and prepared for the will of God." O girl when thy

father or thy mother command thee, or thy grandmother and also thy aunt, do what is ordered thee and do it willingly.

The tenth damsel who stayed with Mary was My Lady Umiltà, and this was the thing that inspired God with so much love for Mary. And Mary began to sing with great joy and devotion and humility: "*Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae: ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes.*—Behold if I consent all generations will call me blessed. O wherefore will they call me blessed? Because He has regarded the humility of His handmaid." And then she turned to the angel with her intention towards God, *Ecce ancilla Domini*—Behold the slave of Messere Dominedio. O how much there is to be said around this point! Father and mother keep thy daughter like a little slave. Is there sweeping to be done in the house? —"Yes"—Yes? Make her sweep. Are the pots to be washed? Make her wash them. Is there dirt to be cleaned up? Make her clean it. Have you washing to be done? Make her do it in the house. "O but here is the servant." So there may be, but make her do it not through any necessity that there may be for her to do it but in order to give her exercise. Make her look after the children, wash the clothes and everything. If thou dost not accustom her to do everything she will become nothing but a lump (*un buon pezzo di carne*). I tell thee do not keep her in ease. If thou keep her exercised she will not stand at the window, her head will not be turning now to one thing now to another. O exercise is such a useful thing! Dost

thou know what she will end by doing? Let her do all thou needest for the house.

The eleventh handmaiden is called My Lady Desiderosa. Always with the greatest desire she did the works she had to do to the honour and glory of God. Thus I tell thee thou shouldst do. Be desirous to do the work that is needful for thee, be desirous when thou canst to give alms to the poor and needy. And if thou hast nothing to give him at least when thou seest a poor man in tatters mend them for him. Make some petticoats for the poor; if thou hast something of thine own give it to them, if thou hast not at least have the desire of wishing to give. Have a desire to wish to do all those things which are to the honour and glory of God. Have a care for the prisoners, poor miserable beings, for it is one of the seven alms-deeds. O women for the love of God think of these poor unhappy prisoners; it is by God that they are committed to your charge.

The twelfth and last companion of the glorious Virgin Mary was My Lady Credenzia. This lady had so much faith that she believed that all things that God willed were possible. *Omnia opera ejus in fide*—all her works in faith—wherefore she said to the angel: *Secundum verbum tuum*.

(iii) St. Bernardino's Farewell Sermon.

Four good things are born in a great sinner when he turns to God repenting of his sin. The first good thing which is born in one who has been a sinner whether in prosperity or adversity, in being

hated or contradicted or despised, is prudence. Like the ass, when he has once fallen in a place he afterwards looks more carefully where he sets his foot, so that from fear of the punishment he takes care to fall into those sins no more, nor yet into others. O great idiot who always remainest in sin, O wretched one, hast thou not considered that the ass teaches thee to save thy soul? The ass falls there no more and thou dost. Wherefore I say that if thou turnest to God with love of Him thou learnest much prudence. O children, don't you know that when you are learning to write well you make blots? And thou too who learnest grammar, thou wilt never learn without first composing bad Latin, so I say of one who wants to ride, thou wilt never learn to ride without falling sometimes. And so I want to speak to these old people. O old man, and thou, old woman, art thou there?—"Yes"—Hast thou fallen into sins often and often?—"Yes"—Hast thou returned to God?—"Yes"—You would never have learnt what a thing sin is except because thou hast tried it. *In antiquis est prudentia.* In the old is prudence and dost thou know why? Because they have had experience and have fallen often (*so caduti di molti botti*) and therefore they go more firmly and take thought better how to set their feet, and especially seeing themselves at a time near to death, they ask mercy of God and moreover thank God that they have not died in their sin and that they have had time to be able to turn to Him. He[1] does not trust in

[1] The change from plural to singular is very characteristic.

himself not to fall but for ever prays God to help him to hold himself up that he may not fall as he has fallen before.

The second gain is humility with obedience. The soul that has lived ill and sees itself arrived at evil, having transgressed and broken the commandments of God, sees itself outside His counsels, begins to return to itself and says: "Where am I? Alas, what have I done?" And it says as David said: *Cogitavi vias meas et converti pedes meos in testimonia tua.* "I have thought on my ways and drawn myself back from the road which was bringing me to evil, and direct Thou me to do all Thy commandments." And having thus confessed he both believes and desires to learn and to observe them. He believes that which Holy Church holds, he hears Mass and Vespers, he has always the Our Father in his mouth and in his heart, and he does what the Church commands both in keeping the feasts and the appointed fasts and he desires never to leave out one of them. Not only does he wish to leave out none, but he desires to add to them, he desires to fast on Friday from veneration of the Passion of Jesus and also on Saturday from veneration for Mary His Mother. He seeks to mount higher than the Church commands, he obeys the command and thinks too of the counsels of holy men and even goes beyond the commandment and counsels of holy men. He never used to go to any sermon and now he never misses one. Dost thou know how the well-disposed soul acts? She does like one of your citizens when he is zealous for your Commune, who, when he hears the bell

ring, at once comes to the Council. Thus this one acts when he hears the bell ring for the sermon, he goes there as quickly, for it is better to go to the council of the soul. The bell is the trumpet of the soul which proclaims as you do to your councils; do not do as he does who is disposed for nothing but to go to the tavern early in the morning or to stand above the public seats to speak evil of the passer-by.

The third good that arises in a sinner who returns to God is compassion for the evil life that he sees in others. O when a man or woman who has never fallen into mortal sin sees another who has fallen he makes such a business about it that there's no peace to be had: whence remember what I want just now to tell thee. Dost thou not know that God did not leave the faith of Holy Church to John who was clean and pure without sin and without stain, but chose to leave it to Peter who among his other sins had that of denying Christ? Why dost thou think he left it to him? He left it to him because he was likely to have compassion for others who might fall into sin. Thou knowest that when the Lord was near to His Passion He prayed for Peter who was going to deny Him and He said: "Peter I have prayed my Father that thy faith may not fail," as if He said, "O Peter who hast denied me take care that thou dost not chase him away but comfort him because as My Father has pardoned thee who hast denied Me, thus He will also pardon this man." And so the Lord chose rather to leave the faith to him than to John or to any one of the others because he would have com-

passion on one who fell into sin as though he would say: "Peter when thou seest a sinner fallen into sin remember thyself that thou too hast fallen." If he had left it to John who was clean and pure and smooth as ermine without any stain, if a sinner had gone to him wrapped round in sin he would have said: "Uh! Uh! Uh! Go away! Go away!" and he would have been the cause of the dispersion of nearly all the sinners. Peter was pitiful because he fell into the sin of denying God and it is said that after he had denied God he always wept and always carried a handkerchief to wipe away his tears. Listen to a good sin, for so much good arose from it. Wherefore say that he who does not fall does not know how to have compassion on one who has fallen. And this is the third thing.

There is born also in the sinner converted to God a great fervour. *Ubi abundat delictum superabundat gratia.* Where sins abound the grace of God superabounds, when he turns to repentance. Thou hast the example of Mary Magdalen. O vain women turn to God as Mary Magdalen did, for I promise you that if you will return to living well you shall abound in greater grace than before you sinned. How much more good does he do who has committed one sin than he who has not! I take this example, that many people go on thus smooth and easy-going, not doing much harm or much good either: there are people thou knowest neither good nor bad. If they were really good it would be good. But being thus just middling, it seems that they will not get any further forward. Many worse have been seen, I don't say merely wicked but ex-

ceedingly wicked, who turn to God and do so much good that it is a joyousness. Thus I will say that there are many cities which are willing to do much evil all of a sudden and as they are quick to do evil, so they return to good and do it with great fervour. Blessed be that evil which makes thee return to God! And one of these is the city of Perugia, and as they (the Perugians) are swift to evil so they are swift to return to good. I never saw a nobler deed than I saw in this place. So many made peace that I greatly marvelled that there should be so many enmities there as there had been. And believe me, there were few of the reconciliations that were made that did not come from the man who had received the offence going to find the one who had offended him and asking his pardon. And many there were who went with a halter round their necks: thus as they are swift to do evil, so are they swift to turn to reform, and to do good. And so I desire to say to thee, people of Siena, return to do good as thou hast before done evil. There are some whose condition is delicate but not deadly, yet if by chance enmity enters by any means among such as these thou mayest vainly preach. There are others whose state is deadly and cruel, who at a few words return like humble lambs. Whence comes this? It comes because in these people so hard and rough the grace of God superabounds and suddenly shows itself. Let no one go away.

Three things I want to remind you of, dearest children; I hold you as my children because you already chose me for your father when you desired

me for your bishop. The first thing is that which belongs to God. God has two arms, and with both arms He embraces the sinner who desires to return to Him. One arm is that of love and the other of fear. The right is love and the left is fear. *Laeva ejus sub capite meo et dextera illius amplexabitur me.* If you wish to be loved by Him, love Him, and if you love, you will be loved, and He will give you every prosperity, and if you fear Him He will keep you from every molestation, from wars, from tempests, from storms, from pestilence and from every evil. Amend yourselves of your faults and He will take away from you afflictions and tribulations, that they do not come upon you through your sins. Also I recall to you the Name of Jesus. I have told you another time how you ought to salute this Name when you hear it mentioned at Mass: Christ or Jesus, which is one and the same, to one or the other be sure to show a sign of reverence with the knee or with the head or by uncovering the head, always with devotion coming from the heart. But tell me, if thou kneelest when thou hearest this name, dost thou not see to Whom thou art kneeling? Thou kneelest to God, the Son of God. Who is he who has no reverence for God, Eh? I have had much consolation from the Hail Mary you say of an evening and you do right well; and you will find that because she is your advocate, if you keep her in reverence and pray humbly to her, she will defend you and will help you in all your adversities and will drive them away. Also I remind you of the feast days, the Sundays, and the solemn days, that you keep them and do no

work except to the honour and glory of God: that is hear Mass, hear the sermon, hear Vespers, say your prayers and do anything else that you can to the glory and honour of God. Also I remind you officers that you are bound to make people keep the feasts commanded by the Church. The officer is not only there to punish the evil doer but also that he may cause good to be done, when he is able to cause it, and if you do not cause good to be done when you are able, on your own head be it (*a la barba vostra*). You too will have to give an account to God. Do you not see that you can make him save his soul who may lose it? He is working? Then take heed. I remind you also of the excommunications. *Doh!* my citizens, *timete Deum, timete Deum, timete Idio.* O have I not told you, I and others, that the Pope is our God on earth? What is the reason that you do not fear him? You fear him whom you have on your back (i.e. the devil) and I tell you that you are in the hands of the devil and it would not be much trouble to the devil to carry off your soul and your body and your goods.[1]

See that thou reverence the priests, the friars, and whoever has holy orders, according to his degree on account of the reverence that thou hast for God. The more rank he has so much the more shouldst thou do him honour, and do not say: "O he is wicked." Do thy duty and if he is wicked he will have to render an account of it, but not

[1] S. Bernardino here spoke of certain constitutions regarding Church matters which he wished changed and which the Commune by his advice modified.

to thee. Take the good and let the bad be. O that lady my Mother Monna Bartolommea, how much she used these good words: Take the good, take the good and not the evil for thou hast to give an account to God of the good thou couldst have done and not of the evil that this man does. And this is what I want to tell you belongs to God: love and fear God, frequent the churches, sermons, Mass and Vespers and other good works, and in this I encourage you. As on the other days thou art always working for the body to support thyself and thy family so give such days as these to the soul, to the glory and honour of God.

Doh! for the love of God love one another. Alas, or do you not see what follows if you love to destroy one another? Do you not see that you yourselves destroy your own selves? *Doh,* for the love of God remedy yourselves, do not wait for God to lay His hand on us with His heavy scourge. Let us give ourselves to Him now and He will scourge us lightly.

Love one another. What I have done to make you make peace and that you may be like brothers I have done with that zeal which I desire my soul to receive. And I say of this as of the other affairs of the commune: I have done all to the honour and glory of God and for the good and salvation of your souls. As I have told you, I have made of you my true children and I tell you moreover that if I could seize you by the hair I would make you all at peace. Let no one think that what I do is done by the demand of any person; I am moved only by the demand and by the honour and

glory of God. I stick only to what God says: *Hoc est praeceptum meum ut diligatis invicem.* This is my commandment my children, be sure to love one another with perfect charity: love God whoever wishes to be one of His. *Doh!* my children do not act so as to move God to anger against you, and this is the second thing that I say to you. I must not forget, too, I have another thing to remind you of, that your prisoners are committed to you, and you, valiant women, be sure four times in the year to make a little collection for them: for Pentecost, All Saints, the Resurrection and the Nativity. At all these four seasons remember it the week before, so that at these seasons you may have the wherewithal to give them some help. This is one of the seven works concerning which we shall be asked by Christ on the Last Day when we are examined by Him. See that you do this for this is very acceptable before the presence of God.

I desire also to remind you to re-establish the *Compagna della Morte.* O if you thought what a wholesome thing this is for the souls of those who were put to death by the Commune! If thou thinkest of it a little thou wilt say that it is true. I see that you are building a fine church over there outside the gate in order that the blood of anyone whose head is cut off there may not be scattered and licked up by the dogs. I say that you do very well. I want to remind you also that of old I know that there was a house in which many good works were done. And although in other places there may be men who do things similar to what I have seen I never saw any who

did so much as the *Compagna della Virgine Maria*.[1] I was formerly one of these myself: and there were there many good men. I desire to remind you not to let it grow less. It is a devout and holy thing; it is not a thing to wish to abandon, wherefore work that you may keep it up.

Now to my own concerns. First I remind you how I have said other times that that which I have preached I have not said as if from myself. *Doctrina mea non est mea: silicet Dei qui misit me.* The doctrine which I have preached to you and that which I have said to you, I have not said from myself but as if sent to you, I have told you what God has ordered me so that you do not have it from me. *Quia omnis homo mendax:* every man is wicked in so far as he is of himself alone. Of himself he cannot work any good except by means of God's grace wherefore every good comes from Him. If you choose to say, We have heard it from thee, I answer as Christ said: *Non enim vos qui loquimini, sed Spiritus Sanctus qui loquitur in vobis,* you are not you who speak but it is the Holy Spirit that speaks in you. Thus I say of myself, I am not I who speak to you when I preach to you but it is the Holy Spirit who makes me speak. Know that you have nothing from me but all from God, and if I speak of myself I could never say anything at all without falling into many defects.

You have not perceived my defects but I perceive them very well myself for I never do anything without committing plenty. But that which I have

[1] This Society continues at the present time.

said to you about the salvation of the soul and on the welfare of your city hold it as certain and settled. I affirm it and confirm it and affirm it again and encourage you all; if you take heed you will live more safely than you have done in the past. And if anyone should come after me who should want to say the contrary to what I have said to you, know that he has the devil on his back and will perhaps lead you ill if you believe him, for what he says will be against the doctrine of Christ. But I have faith in you that you will not let yourselves be thus lightly moved; if however anyone says the contrary do not believe him but stand always firm and staunch founded on firm ground, having always your intention straight towards God. Moreover I thank the *Magnifici Signori* for the charity they have shown towards me, and also every citizen, and I thank you all who most humbly have borne with me in my speaking and have shown me more love than I deserve. I want too to remind you that my soul is committed to you that you should pray to God for me and I will pray for you. I think I am going away to-morrow and I do not know if we shall ever see ourselves together again. O if I never return to see you again, whether I meet with you or none of you ever meet with me, because I expect to go into far distant countries and he who goes far may be long in returning, from the love that I have ever borne you and bear you I pray you to pray to God for me: both that He may give me grace to do His Will, and that I may persevere in this craft in such a way that I may teach the peoples to the glory of God and direct them in the way of the commandments of God. And I com-

mend to you that you should say for me every day an Our Father and a Hail Mary, and I will pray God that He enlighten us with His grace that when we come to depart from this life we may render up our soul to Him all clean and pure, that He may bring us all to His blessed glory to dwell there with Him and the glorious saints *in saecula saeculorum*.

And so [concludes Benedetto the scribe] giving the blessing with the confession he said: " I leave you with the peace of Messere Domenedio, and pray to God for me."

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